

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

ADVENTURES
IN NAKEDNESS

K. K. Langens

Pour éviter
**DÉFENSE
EXPRESSE
DE FUMER**

ici

**NUDISME
INTEGRAL**
exclusivement



ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

by

JULIAN STRANGE

ILLUSTRATED PROFUSELY FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

“I am Alexander the Great,” said the monarch.
“And I am Diogenes the Cynic,” replied the
philosopher. Alexander then requested that he
would inform him what service he could render
him. Said Diogenes: “Stand thou from between
me and the sun!”

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*ADVENTURES
IN NAKEDNESS*



EN ROUTE



Introducing Myself

I AM a proper person.

By birth, by tradition, by environment, by education, by natural inclination, I am a conservative.

As a boy I played with the children of other conservative families. We were well, but not too well supplied with money. We were well dressed and well mannered. We did not chew gum, smoke cigarettes, or indulge in strong language. We did not torment animals, play hookey from school, or go fishing on Sunday. Perhaps we missed a lot, but then, we were conservative.

I went to Sunday school because I liked it. I read far more than was required by the schools I attended. I graduated from college with both scholastic and athletic distinctions. Among the latter were winnings in the National, the Metropolitan, and the Intercollegiate athletic championships. I settled down to become a proper member of a proper society.

My tastes are those of the critical minority. In my whole life I have witnessed only one burlesque show.

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I thought it disgusting. In the course of years of theatre-going I have rarely, of my own choice, witnessed a "revue." I considered many of them indecent. I never cared for musical comedy (Gilbert and Sullivan excepted), preferring the opera, and I have always liked symphonic music better than either.

Only twice have I attended professional prize-fights. I have gone to the races fewer than half a dozen times in the twenty-odd years since I reached my majority. I could not identify the "Red Sox" or the "Cubs," though I am passionately fond of amateur sports and keep up boxing and tennis.

I have never bought a smutty postcard. I have never been arrested. I have driven motor-cars ever since I was fifteen years old, and no convictions mar my record. I have never been drunk.

I have visited gambling-houses in American, Spanish-American, and European cities, and played roulette only once. I won a small sum and was bored. I have never played poker, though I am considered strong at bridge.

My neighbours agree that I am respectable. They have elected me to political office as a Democrat and also as a Republican. I belong to three rather exclusive clubs. I am an honorary member of various associations. I am an executive official of several organizations. I am two trustees and half a dozen directors. I am connected with the administration of one Protestant Church organization. I was an officer in our armed forces during the War.

INTRODUCING MYSELF

I have written many books of the respectable, conservative kind. They have been translated into various languages. If you graduated from college during the last ten years, something of mine was among your prescribed reading. Even if your education ended with high school, you may not have escaped me, for selections from my writings figured in your text-books.

Yet I am a convert to nudism, enjoying nudism, advocating nudism, and finding nothing in the practice of nudism to conflict with my ideals of correct, rational, proper living.

Nudism! Orgy! "Do you mean to say they don't wear *any* clothes?" Quite so! The time, the place, the society permitting, we go bare as eels—men and women together—and yet I am a proper person.

I remember the first time another little boy disrobed in my presence. I was shocked. I turned my head away modestly—and yet I did not hesitate to dress and undress in the presence of my nurse.

I became accustomed to the nakedness of my own sex in school and in college; but I was startled when feminine bathing-suits began to shrink. When for the first time I went bathing with a girl who wore no stockings, I was embarrassed, even if she was not. I thought one-piece bathing-suits—we used to call them "Annette Kellermanns"—were bold. I protested when my wife first appeared in one. And yet this morning, being sunny, I instructed a young married woman in tennis, aiding her to master the backhand drive—and neither of us wore a single stitch of clothing! I placed

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my hand over hers and swung her racket through the correct arc — and the observers, who included her husband and her brother, instead of assaulting me, picked up their own rackets and tried to imitate us. They were as naked as we.

Presently I went for a swim. A young couple, naked as the days they were born, were just stepping into the water.

The man turned. "Mary," he said, "I want to introduce Mr. Strange."

The young wife bowed without the least embarrassment. "How do you do, Mr. Strange?" she said.

"How do you do?" I kicked off the slippers which I had donned to walk to the beach, and which were my only garment. I waded into the lake. "Do you know if George Fulton is still at the Club?" I asked the husband. "Did he go back to New York?"

"Oh, no," he assured me. "He'll be here in the afternoon. He's gone to church."

"I expect to play tennis with him."

"You won't," said the young married woman. "You'll both be needed in the baseball game."

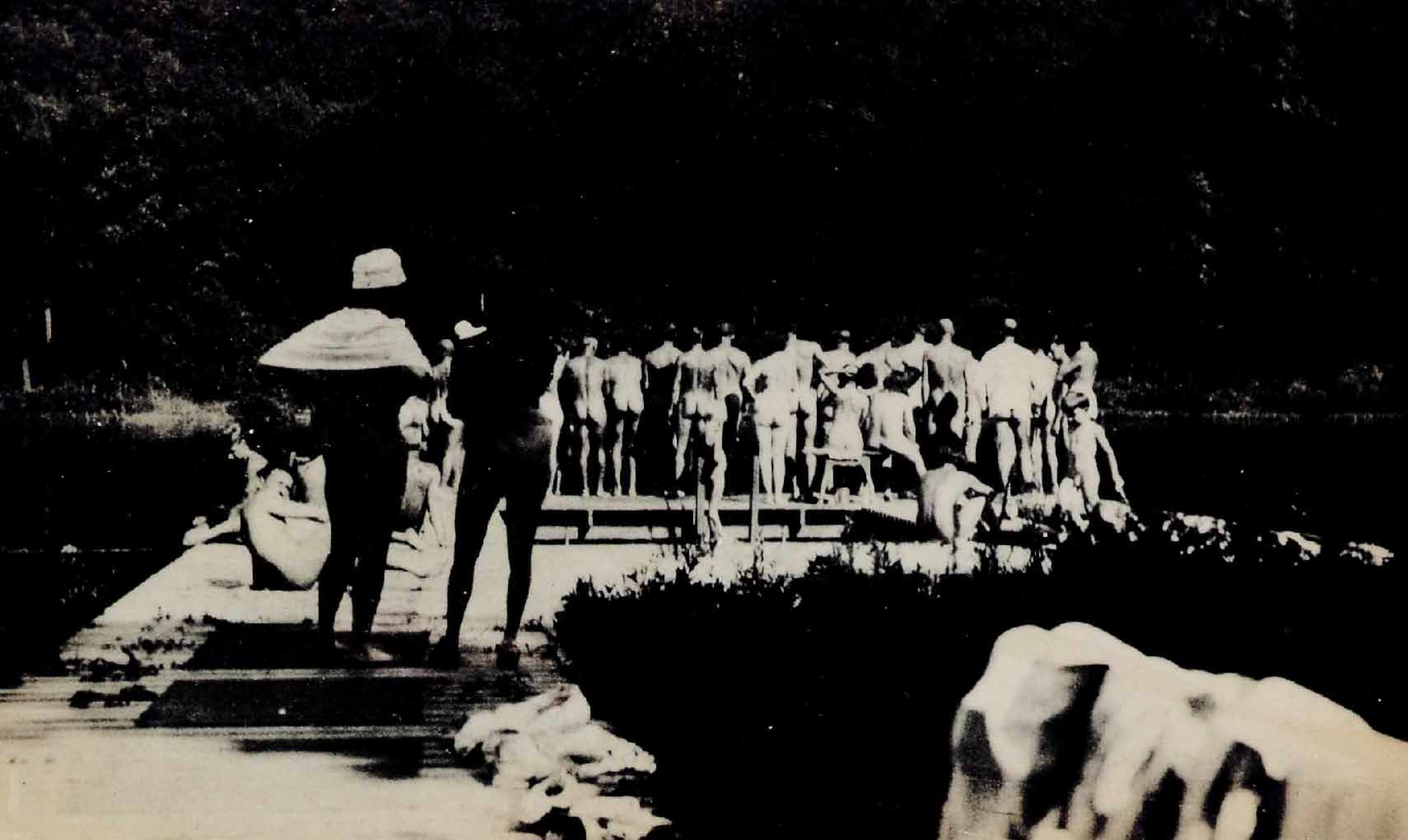
"Do you play baseball here naked?" I asked.

"Of course!" she said.

And in the afternoon we all played — but of that, more later.

And I am a proper person!





How I Became Interested

When I was a boy, one of my chums had an inseparable companion. It was a squirrel which lived in his pocket, where it cuddled up into a round little ball of whose existence he could never be entirely unaware. It emerged at intervals to scamper head downwards over his coat, to snatch nuts out of his fingers, and generally to add to the interest of living. It misbehaved only rarely.

Now that I am a man, I, too, have an inseparable companion. It is a disease which lives in my body and of whose existence I can never be entirely unaware. As diseases go, it is a pleasant disease, for it is non-contagious and non-infectious and seldom interferes with my enjoyment of outdoor sports. It emerges at intervals, however, to strike me down, to rack me with the most atrocious pain I have ever endured, and to cause the physicians to summon other physicians into consultation — for it is incurable and adds, in its own forthright way, to the interest of living. But it is like the squirrel: it misbehaves only rarely.

It was 1929 and I was on a vacation at one of the best-known of American resorts. I swam daily — sometimes twice a day. I played tennis. I went to dinners, to dances, and to the theatre. And then my companion emerged from a long period of quiescence, and life became a nightmare from which there was no waking.

A surgeon, summoned from his bed in the night hours, performed an emergency operation and less-

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ened my pain. X-ray specialists and laboratory technicians investigated my interior on the following day and reported the existence of an acute infection. "The only question," said my physician methodically, "is whether we do the radical operation today or tomorrow."

"I feel so rotten that I don't care what you do."

He nodded. "We'll wait till tomorrow — if you can stand the pain that long."

"I'll try. What's the operation like?"

"It's a mean one," he said frankly. "You'll be flat on your back for a week afterwards, and it will be a month or more before you feel like yourself again."

"Will it cure me?"

He shook his head. "Your disease is incurable."

"Let's see what tomorrow brings," I said.

It brought another unfavourable report from the technicians, but no intensification of symptoms which could hardly have been more disagreeable. "Just so long as the pain isn't unbearable," said the doctor, "we'll wait another day."

There began a period of my life to which I cannot look back without horror. I could not eat, I could not sleep, I could not exercise, and living had lost its pleasures. I grimace when I read what I have written: my language might be that of a patent-medicine testimonial. But there was a time when my only grimaces were those of pain. . . . Daily I was re-examined; daily blood-counts were made by the laboratory.

HOW I BECAME INTERESTED

"No better and no worse," said the doctor.

"Do something," I begged.

"I don't want to operate — yet."

"I don't care what you do so long as you do something."

"Do you want me to give you morphine?"

"No," I said. "I have never taken it, and I don't want to begin."

It is unpleasant for a normal man to be compelled to give up his relaxations. Tennis was impossible. Swimming — had I felt up to it — was forbidden. Social intercourse had lost its attractions, for I was acutely, painfully ill. And the days dragged along and became weeks.

"I'd like to call Dr. P— into consultation," said my doctor.

"Go ahead."

Doctor P— examined me carefully. "Do you like the beach?" he asked.

"I love it."

"Go there tomorrow in the middle of the day — when the sun is hottest — and take off your shirt."

"What good will that do?"

"It may do none, but it's worth trying. Begin with twenty minutes. Lengthen it five minutes every day until you can stand a full hour of it. Let me know what happens."

When I drove to the beach, I was so ill that I did not exceed fifteen miles an hour for fear that I might

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lose control of the car. I found a secluded spot, lay down, and followed orders. Other male bathers had been known to remove their shirts. Never before had I imitated them.

The sun blazed down on me; my skin began to tingle.

"How do you feel?" asked my wife at the end of the twenty minutes.

I took stock of my various organs. I was immensely surprised. "I feel better," I declared, "and I'd like to eat something."

At the end of ten days I was spending an hour daily in the midday sunlight, attired only in trunks. My blood-count had fallen to normal. The doctors were delighted. "You needn't come back for a week," they said, "but don't stop the sun-bathing."

"How about tennis?"

"If you really feel strong enough."

"If I really feel strong enough?" I laughed. For an instant, I believe, I nearly lost my self-control, for I had made a great discovery. I had learned that my inseparable companion, whose excursion had had such terrible consequences, did not care for light and could be driven back into hiding.

Enter the Censors

It was not until a later period that the police, suddenly becoming active, began arresting men for removing their shirts at the beach, and arresting women for

ENTER THE CENSORS

letting down their shoulder-straps and tying them across from armpit to armpit.

Road labourers take off their shirts — but it is not pleasant to arrest a sweaty Italian, while not even the most fastidious police officer can object to apprehending a fellow-countryman — particularly if the latter has just had a bath.

Women were included in the drag-net. . . .

Many modern ball-gowns omit shoulder-straps, and reveal more of the torsos of their wearers than do bathing-costumes — but the prudes, with few exceptions, are not a socially attractive class and are not invited to balls. . . .

“Why should you take off your shirt?” a Puritanical friend asked me.

“Why not?”

“If you want a sun-bath, you’re exposing plenty of arm and leg.”

I told him of my experience. “If arm and leg had been sufficient, I should have recovered a month before I did.”

“But if it’s against the law —”

“It ought not be.”

On the first day of the drive the police arrested seventeen offenders. The Chief, impressive in uniform, came to the spot where I was sitting. “Where’s your shirt?” he demanded.

“I haven’t any,” I said.

“You’re not telling me you came to the beach in trunks!”

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"Certainly not."

He glanced around. "Is that your bathrobe in the sand?"

"Yes."

He turned to an officer who accompanied him. "Put Mr. Strange's bathrobe around his shoulders," he commanded.

"Aren't you going to arrest me?"

He did not reply. . . .

"What did you do with the seventeen men?" I asked my friend the Judge when I met him at a dinner the following night.

He chuckled. "I did something very clever."

"Tell me about it."

"I gave them a good talking-to. I said to them: 'If you fellows were Adonises, it would be another story; but you're not. Just look at yourselves! When you take off your shirts, you're not beautiful. Some of you have pot-bellies. Some of you have caved-in chests. There's not one of you that I can look at without offending my æsthetic sense. Am I right? Now, this time I'm going to let you off with suspended sentences — I find you all guilty. But next time — if there is a next time — I'm going to land on you hard!' What do you think of that, Mr. Strange?"

"It wasn't clever."

"No?"

"You missed an important point, Judge."

"How so?"

"It's the men who have no shapes to speak of —

ENTER THE CENSORS

men like you and me, Judge — who need the sunlight more than the young Adonises.”

He frowned. “It’s possible, you know, to rent one of the newfangled sun-bathing contraptions and lie on a mattress surrounded by a wall of canvas — ”

“Stewing in your own juice — ”

“Getting a sun-bath.”

“It’s expensive, and lots of people can’t afford it.”

“Yes, that’s true,” he admitted.

“It’s unsociable.”

“What man wants to be sociable while he’s taking a sun-bath? ”

“I do. When I go to the beach, I like to take my wife and children.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Oh, are *you* on the side of the sinners? ”

“Very much so.”

“Doesn’t it offend you to see a man stripped to the waist in a mixed company? ”

“Don’t mixed companies attend prize-fights and wrestling-matches? ”

“But a pot-bellied man — or a man with a caved-in chest? ”

“I’m sorry for them, exactly as I’m sorry for a man with a club-foot, or a child with rickets; but offended? Heavens, no! ”

“What does Mrs. Strange think about it? ”

“She approves heartily. She knows how the sunlight benefited me.”

He lowered his voice. “Have you thought of the

other angle? What of the emotions that you may be arousing in some of the young women that see you?"

It was my turn to chuckle. "Judge," I said heartily, "if any woman, young or old, tells you that the sight of me minus a shirt has aroused lewd, lecherous, or lascivious emotions in her bosom, give me her name and telephone number."

He smiled. "I'll try to remember that one. But, speaking seriously, my opinions are of no consequence. I am the servant of the law. It is my duty to find in accordance with existing statutes."

"Correct — and I'll help you to show up one which is foolish."

A week later the police made another raid. I was shirtless, but was apparently invisible to them. The captives were fined.

I wrote a letter to the most influential newspaper. It was printed, and it was accompanied by a stinging editorial endorsing the stand I had taken.¹

¹ "BANDITRY vs. BIGOTRY"

"In the ——— today appears the expression of 'A Visitor' who, except for his modesty, might have signed himself 'One of ———'s Most Distinguished Visitors.' The exception to the rule of printing the names with contributions on controversial subjects is allowed for two reasons: that the writer is known to be one who will not shirk the responsibility for his statements and that his view reflects the attitude of a man of culture, and in this case, an internationally known man of learning.

"Until recently the police force at ——— has shown far more proficiency in enforcing the rule against men unbuttoning the shoulder straps of their bathing suits on the beach than in preventing the operations of swindlers and thieves such as are now on trial in

ENTER THE CENSORS

The arrests continued.

I brought the question to the attention of the municipal authorities. "Of course," the mayor let me know in a five-page letter, "it's all right for you to do what you please, because we know you, and we know that you will never do anything that is in bad taste. If you wish to take off your shirt, you will find an isolated spot in which to do it. But we must use the police to control the others."

I abandoned my favourite haunt for one which was less isolated.

The arrests continued — and so did the editorials.

"Look here," said the Judge one day, "do you mind if I ask you something? What will happen if we arrest *you*?"

"What an extraordinary question! *You* are the Judge. It is for you to say what is going to happen, not for the man who is haled into your court."

New York, where they were finally arrested for a jewelry robbery here. . . .

"There has been a revival of interest in the business of protecting visitors from bandits and racketeers. The job is big enough to command the attention of the entire police force. We shall be inclined to forgive them, and many visitors will remain to thank them, if they are a little lax in enforcement of an ordinance that defines public decency as a line across a man's chest, providing their time is occupied in protecting persons and personal property of our guests.

"If we correctly interpret the present law enforcement aims at —, public safety at last has been recognized as of first importance and the ordinance protested by 'A Visitor' may be invoked, as it should be, only in cases of unquestionably indecent exposure rather than as a mere tapeline to measure a man's sun tan. Banditry must have first attention; bigotry has had its day."

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“Overlooking the fact that I’m the Judge, what’s the answer?”

“I’m glad to be able to tell you. I’m glad you asked me. If I’m arrested, I’ll refuse to plead.”

“On what grounds?”

“For two reasons: you’re my friend, and I don’t want to embarrass you; and I want to be tried before a judge and a jury.”

“All right. I’ll let you go on bail — or on your own recognizance. Your case will come to trial in two weeks. What next?”

I half-closed my eyes. “I’ll be my own lawyer. I’ll make a speech — an interesting one. There’ll be reporters there. Every word I say will be printed in a hundred newspapers the next morning — for it’s going to be news.”

“Oh!” he said slowly.

“It will be a splendid advertisement for this popular resort.”

He grinned. “I don’t think we’ll arrest you. Er — what do you suggest?”

I had a suggestion ready.

“I don’t know if it will work,” said the Judge. “Won’t there be — well, you know — won’t there be complete nakedness?”

It was before I had acquired a first-hand knowledge of nudism, but I would make the same answer today. “I think you will find,” I said, “that nudists demand a greater degree of privacy than they can have on a public beach. From the little that I’ve heard of them

I TALK TO MERRILL

I've come to the conclusion that they're probably a decent lot of people."

"Well, we'll try it," said the Judge doubtfully.

Today the beach is divided into two sections. One section is policed, and every law on the statute books is enforced. The other section is let severely alone, and no instance of complete nakedness has ever been reported from it.

And satisfaction reigns everywhere.

I Talk to Merrill

From a justified faith in the therapeutic value of sunlight to a belief in nudism — at the proper places and with proper safeguards — is a long step. I did not make it in haphazard fashion.

When the Merrills' pioneer volume, *Among the Nudists*, appeared in 1931, I read it. I already knew that partial nudity was good for the health. I encountered the amazing statement that the complete and joint nudity of the two sexes, as practised at European centres, was good for the morals. Surely few assertions more paradoxical, more at variance with previously accepted tenets, have ever been made.

The older generation had taught us that a sense of bodily shame was an indispensable element among the reactions of a civilized individual. There was nothing wrong in admitting the public to art museums, in allowing it to see statues of the nude, bas-reliefs of the nude, and paintings of the nude. Not only was

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it not wrong, but it was an important part of modern education. Titian, Rubens, Botticelli, Bougereau, Henner were household names because of their masterful representation of naked flesh. But to allow the public to behold that actual flesh — except through the eyes of painters and sculptors, who made it vastly more alluring than it could be in real life — was somehow deleterious to virtue.

It was moral for actresses on the stage — usually women of more than average attractiveness and charm — to reveal themselves in suggestive *déshabillés*. It was immoral for ordinary men and women — most of whom lacked graceful figures — to drop the last shreds of clothing and gaze upon one another in the guise in which God made them. *Paul and Virginia* had ceased to have a circulation; but saints had been canonized for what Brewer calls the “prurient modesty” of refusing to gaze at their own naked bodies. Admittedly they were less well known than Lady Godiva, who, in turn, was less well known than “Peeping Tom”; but in the minds of the moralists virtue and ample clothing were indissolubly associated, and the natural, inevitable sexual curiosity of normal adolescents was looked upon as something to be rigorously suppressed. Nevertheless I more than suspected that the statement of the Merrills, revolutionary as it was, contained the germ of a logical truth.

I met Merrill for the first time at a popular restaurant in New York City. I had asked him over the telephone: “How shall I identify you?” and he had

I TALK TO MERRILL

given me a painstaking description of himself, when he might have saved time by stating simply: "Pick out the most respectable-looking man in the place."

Slightly under average height, spare, quietly dressed, quiet-mannered, low-voiced, diffident, and an abstemious eater, he would probably have been branded a curate by me had I been asked to guess at his occupation. He had been a flier with the A. E. F., he informed me, and until recently an instructor in a university. I gazed around the restaurant and recognized old acquaintances: a well-known actor with his fourth wife; a distinguished playwright with his third; other public characters with actual or prospective mistresses. I turned with interest from the men who subscribed to one of the many moralities of the clothed to the man who did not. "Now let's have a chat about nudism."

He said to me: "Have you ever practised it?"

I thought of a submerged chapter in my otherwise respectable life and said: "Yes."

"I'd like to hear about it."

"I was at a fashionable dinner. Where it was does not matter. I was one of the few older men there. The supply of liquor was ample. It had its usual effect. At about two o'clock in the morning a pretty girl of twenty or twenty-one came up to me and said: 'We're getting up a swimming-party. Do you want to come along?'

"I said: 'Yes. Just wait till I run home and get my bathing-suit.'

"She said: 'Oh, don't be old-fashioned!'

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"I am a good sport, and, besides, I was curious. I smiled, and said: 'All right.'"

Merrill interrupted me. "That was *not* nudism."

"We drove to a private swimming-pool on an estate belonging to one of my friends. We occupied five or six cars: I dare say there were two dozen of us. I drove my own car — largely because I was sober, and many of the other guests were not. I had six passengers, and a glance into the rear-view mirror told me that there was more than the usual amount of petting going on. Everybody was exhilarated. We were on a lark. We were about to do something naughty.

"We reached the pool. There was a brilliant moon. We stripped as we tumbled out of the cars, and dived into the water one after another.

"Ten minutes after we had started, I found myself standing at the side of the pool talking to two girls.

"'Mr. Strange,' one of them said suddenly, 'do you realize that you are naked?'

"I thought it over. 'No,' I said."

Again Merrill interrupted. "*That* was nudism."

"I turned back to her. 'And you, do you realize it?'

"'No,' she said — and I can't hope to imitate the irritation and disappointment in her voice. You see, she had started out with the idea of being wicked.

"I looked at the people in the pool — and scattered on the grass. The cold plunge had sobered them. All of them — men and women together — were behaving as innocently as a lot of boys. They were romping, laughing, playing tag and leapfrog, having a good

time generally. If there were improprieties, I saw none, and I watched for them. When they had been dressed, there was no keeping them out of each other's arms. The moment that they were naked, they were exemplary."

And Merrill said: "That, too, is nudism."

"It was a party which started off with intentions which not even the most charitable critic could have characterized as praiseworthy. The influence of nakedness was immediate and decisive.

"Then we got dressed again — and the petting recommenced."

Merrill nodded. "I understand perfectly."

And Merrill Talks to Me

"So you're sailing for Europe," said Merrill, "and you'd like to see something of nudism?"

"Yes."

"I wish I could be with you, but I'm not going over this summer. Just look at me: I've lost my coat of tan. . . . You'll be going to Germany?"

"Yes."

"And France?"

"And Switzerland — and Austria — and Czechoslovakia — and Belgium — and Holland."

"What languages do you speak?"

"French and German — some Italian."

"You'll have a fine time. . . . One of these days nudist clubs will be as plentiful in America as they are

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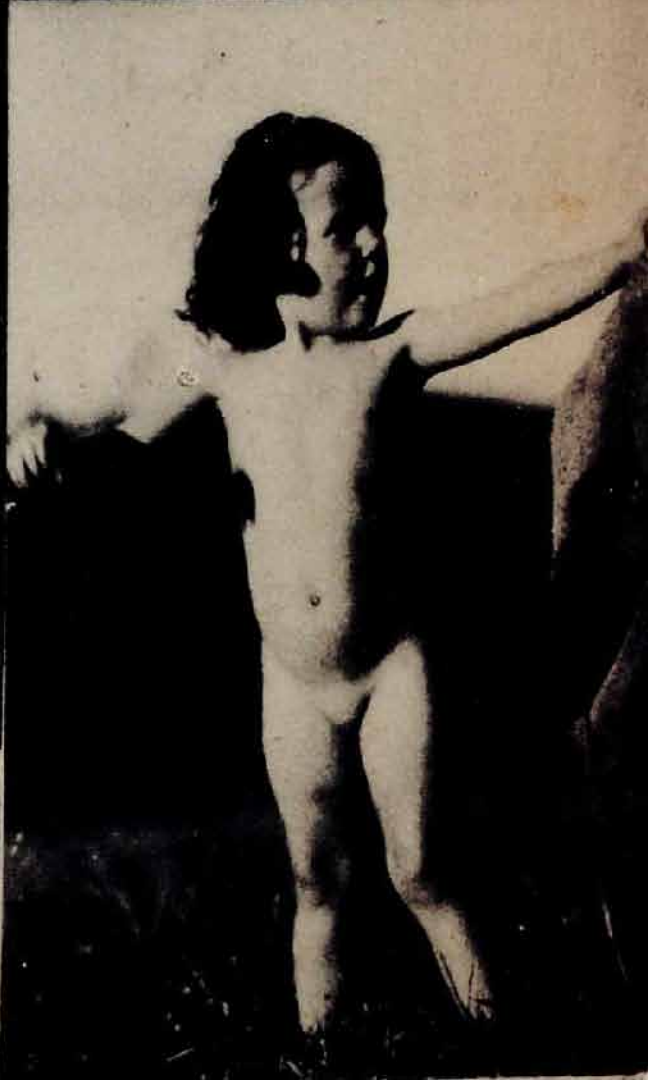
on the other side, and the public attitude will be sympathetic. Nudism happens to be novel at the moment. New ideas sink in slowly. Today we Americans are the most Puritanical people in the world."

I asked him a question. "I have practised semi-nakedness — at the beach — for some years now, and it's made me healthier than I've been since I was a boy. Why should complete nakedness be necessary?"

Merrill had a ready answer. "You'll spend a week at a place where you'll be in and out of the water a dozen times daily. You like swimming, don't you? How do you like drying off in a wet bathing-suit between times?"

"No more than you do."

"Exactly. It's only the civilized nations that get dressed up for the purpose of taking a bath. . . . You like to exercise. Why not expose yourself completely to the sunlight while you do so? The parts of your body which you usually hide need a sun-bath — and an air-bath — as much as your hands and your face. They need them more: they're exposed so seldom. . . . You indulge in games. You perspire. Why do it in a filthy, unsanitary way, under your clothes, when you might do it in a clean way, in the open air? . . . You bathe your whole body in the water. Why not bathe all of it in the light as well? . . . Clothes happen to be a necessity most of the time. You wouldn't want to take them off in the presence of people whom you might shock. You're not an exhibitionist, and it would be even more distasteful to you than it would be





to them. Even if the public attitude were different, you wouldn't care about walking through city streets — or riding in the subway — naked. You couldn't attend to your affairs without a place for your fountain-pen and your memorandum book. You must have a pocket for money, for a handkerchief, for cigarettes, for matches. When it's chilly, you need protection against the cold. When it's blowy and damp, you need the same protection against the wind. But think how your body — all of it — rejoices at the chance of getting out of the wrappings in which you are compelled to smother it most of your life! ”

“ But the nakedness of the two sexes together? ”

“ It's sociable,” said Merrill sharply, “ and it's morally beneficial. I grant that you might put up one pen for the men, and another for the women, and a third for the children — though some reactionaries might prefer to divide the children among two pens of their own. But the average man, who has only his week-ends and his vacations to spend with his family, dislikes being separated from his wife and children, particularly when he learns — as he learns so quickly — that there is nothing fundamentally wrong in nakedness.” He smiled. “ You like the society of women. It's entirely natural that you do. You wouldn't care about a week-end of sun-bathing, swimming, and exercising if you were to be surrounded by men only. You might do it as a conditioner, just as men become voluntary prisoners in training-camps and pay to have themselves bullied back to health; but you wouldn't

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

do it for enjoyment, and you wouldn't repeat it as often as you had the opportunity. You wouldn't do it regularly week-ends if it were strictly stag. Bear in mind, too, that women like the society of men just as much as men like theirs." His eyes twinkled. "And remember, when you think of joint nakedness, that you have been an eyewitness of its excellent effects."

"But modesty?"

"You've been taught to hide certain parts of your body. Why? Because you've been brought up by people who've been brought up by people who've been brought up to do it. Are the parts you hide different from those of other individuals? Doesn't the whole world know what they look like? Nakedness is natural. Modesty is merely a convention, as inconsistent as some other conventions. Moorish women think nothing of exposing their bodies. They object to showing their faces. The most fashionable French women, not so long ago, exposed their breasts. The Japanese and the Scandinavians are not embarrassed by nakedness; yet American women, before styles overcame their scruples, thought it wrong to show their calves."

I thought it over. "Boiled down to essentials, modesty means compliance with the notions of the people among whom you may happen to be."

Merrill nodded. "Do you recall Anatole France's *Île des pingouins*? They were all accustomed to go naked. When the first of the Penguin young women dressed herself, she immediately became the object of sexual curiosity and was followed about the island by

AND MERRILL TALKS TO ME

a string of males. Now, I call that downright immodest."

"Well, I'm game. I'm willing to experiment. What introductions are you going to give me?"

"You won't need any. There are private clubs where they don't allow visitors and where my introduction wouldn't help. At the others they'll size you up themselves, and if they don't approve of you, they'll let you know it fast enough."

"Klingberg?"

"Open to any decent man or woman who pays the fees and obeys the rules."

"The French nudists?"

"I'd advise you to go there first. Northern Germany's apt to be pretty chilly before June. Frances and I found it so. Look up Monsieur de Mongeot in Paris — tell him I referred you to him if you wish — and give him my regards. His club used to have grounds at Évreux. I understand it's nearer Paris now."

"Are there other places I might visit — if I like it?"

"There's hardly a large city that lacks a nudist club. Buy a copy of any of the nudist periodicals for a list of organizations and addresses."

We left the restaurant together.

At the door I met a publisher whom I had not seen in years. He shook hands with me cordially.

"You haven't met my wife, have you? Marjorie, this is Julian Strange."

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She was blonde and petite. Her predecessor had been tall and dark. And *her* predecessor had been a red-head.

I bowed. "How do you do?"

"Going abroad this summer, Julian?"

"I sail in two weeks."

"Isn't that fine! Julian, we'll be in Paris in June. Don't forget to look us up at the Ritz."

I promised — but even then I knew I might not keep the promise.

SPARTA



Paging Monsieur de Mongeot

PARIS is a protean city. The Parc de Monceau is a favourite playground for the children of the better classes. North of it radiates one of the many fans of streets so typical of Paris: the rue de Prony, the rue de Logelbach, the rue de Phalsbourg, the rue de Thann, and the rue Georges-Berger, all bound together by the Boulevard de Courcelles, which traverses their intersection. Some of these streets are fashionable. At least two are dotted with bachelor apartments and wickedness. Business has found a foothold in others.

A sign on the door at number 2 bis, rue de Logelbach, told callers to walk in. I opened the door and found myself in a cubbyhole built out of a window, another door, and a partition.

I presented myself at the window, beyond which I could see tables strewn with papers, and walls lined with stacks of books.

A stenographer inquired my business.

“Is this the office of the Ligue Vivre Intégralement?”

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"*Mais oui, monsieur.*"

"Will you be so very good as to take my card in to Monsieur de Mongeot?"

"Monsieur de Mongeot is not in. He is at the centre. Monsieur de Mongeot lives at the centre."

"I desire very much to visit the centre."

She was sympathetic. "*Hélas*, it is indispensable first to see Monsieur de Mongeot."

It was becoming interesting. "Quite so. But if Monsieur de Mongeot remains at the centre, and it is not permitted to visit the centre unless one has first seen Monsieur de Mongeot, how does one eventually arrive to succeed?"

She reflected a moment. "Monsieur de Mongeot finds himself here at the *bureau* at hours of irregularity."

"Excellent! And when will occur the next hour of irregularity?"

"He may be here at five o'clock this afternoon."

"*Très bien*. And will you inform Monsieur de Mongeot that I shall give myself the honour of calling on him at that time?"

"But of a certainty, monsieur."

At five thirty he was still absent, and I rectified the omission I had made in the morning. I mentioned that I bore an introduction.

Monsieur Charles-Auguste Bontemps, "*le Délégué à la Propagande*," immediately presented himself. "You are a friend of Monsieur Merrill?"

"Indeed."

PAGING MONSIEUR DE MONGEOT

"And how are Monsieur and Madame Merrill? I trust that they are well."

I had dined with the Merrills two nights before sailing and was able to reassure him. "I am anxious to visit the centre."

Monsieur Bontemps was helpful. "Monsieur de Mongeot may not be here until Thursday. We have just bought new grounds, and there is a great deal of work to be done on them. But for a friend of Monsieur Merrill, the principal propagandist of nudism in the United States, we shall be glad to make an exception. Monsieur de Mongeot has a telephone. . . ."

"Ah!"

After two vain struggles with the long-distance operator I reached Monsieur de Mongeot.

"A friend of Monsieur Merrill? I shall be delighted if you will visit me at the centre Wednesday morning."

Monsieur Bontemps indicated its location on the map. "'Le Grand Potager,' it calls itself." ("*Le Grand Potager*" means merely "The Large Kitchen-Garden.") "If you get lost, inquire for Le Grand Potager."

Giquel, the athletic instructor, who was hovering about in duck pants and a sleeveless shirt, showed me a photograph. "The gate at Le Grand Potager, m'sieu: so that you will recognize it when you see it."

I left Paris on Wednesday morning. I circled about the magnificent Arc de Triomphe and followed the avenue de la Grande Armée to the Porte Neuilly. I

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drove through Saint-Germain-en-Laye, with its gloomy château, birthplace of Louis XIV. I passed through Poissy, where an even earlier Louis was born, and at the end of an hour's drive reached Mantes, among whose ruins William the Conqueror was fatally injured. It was typical French country: rolling hills threaded by the Seine, and soaked in twice a thousand years of history.

At Mantes I crossed the river amid scenery of the kind that Daubigny painted, and was in and out of the tiny hamlet of Limay before I realized it. On a hillside, charming in the morning light, perched the ancient village of Fontenay-les-Saint-Pères, looking, doubtless, exactly as it had looked a dozen centuries before.

"Le Grand Potager?" I asked a peasant who walked along the roadside.

"I have never heard of it, m'sieu."

"Le Grand Potager?" I asked an elderly couple driving in a buggy.

They had heard the name, but did not know the location of the place.

I surveyed Fontenay-les-Saint-Pères, spread out on the other side of the valley like a map below an aviator. Obviously a gate like that in the photograph called for a massive stone wall — and one such was visible far to the right.

I found the gate and rang the ancient bell. A trim little maid opened for me.

"*C'est ici Le Grand Potager?*" I inquired.

MANOIR JAN

“Excuse me, m’sieu,” she said with an English accent, “I don’t understand French.”

Manoir Jan

Monsieur de Mongeot, a tall, well-built Nordic with curly blond hair and a most un-French physiognomy — though he spoke no word except French — received me at the head of a flight of steps leading to the door of the château. “Did you have much trouble in finding us?” he inquired. “Of course you should have asked for ‘Manoir Jan,’ and not ‘Le Grand Potager.’ The first thing we did when we bought this place was to change its name. Come into the château. I am so sorry that Monsieur and Madame Merrill cannot see it. They visited us two years ago at Évreux, but the Sparta Club was not so comfortable there as it will be here.”

He led me into a rambling building dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with enough beamed ceilings to make the possessor of any American Colonial dwelling green with envy. “Our dining-room.” It was a vast affair, of baronial dimensions, with an open fireplace at either side. “The paintings on the walls are by Raymond Pallier, the artist, one of our members. Last Sunday was the first day that we were open. Nearly a hundred members came here to celebrate.”

Across the hallway was the large and high-ceilinged kitchen, spotless as one might desire. Here was gath-

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ered the curiously cosmopolitan staff: Madame de Mongeot, typically Gallic; Madame Renaut, the mother-in-law, who had lived in England for years and spoke English fluently; a French man-of-all-work; a Bohemian cook; the maid who had admitted me — from Northumberland.

“I want to show you through the rest of the building.” The second storey was given up to bedrooms strung out in chains, so that the occupants of distant ones were obliged to pass through others on their comings and goings. The short hall connected with three bedrooms in three different chains.

De Mongeot smiled. “The château is nearly three hundred years old. This is the way they used to build.”

The third storey housed two large and airy dormitories under a gabled roof. “We can accommodate twenty-four members here,” said Monsieur de Mongeot. “Unfortunately, you are the only visitor today. It is a week-day, and, besides, it is cold.”

We walked through the spacious grounds. “Here,” he indicated an area behind an old mill, whose ground floor was rudely fitted up with horizontal planks and hooks for garments, “we plan to build a *piscine*: a swimming-pool. On the other side of the château is the vegetable garden. You saw it from the windows. The grounds immediately surrounding the château will be reserved for semi-nudism. Not all of our members practise complete nudism, and nudism is not allowed in the château itself.”

We plunged into a muddy footpath which wound through the trees and bushes. "Here is our little stream. It is only waist-deep, and it is all of the bathing-facilities we possess at the moment; but when the swimming-pool is finished, it will give us a plentiful supply of water."

A foot-bridge crossed the streamlet, and we climbed to a level area screened by densely growing vegetation. "The nudarium," said Monsieur de Mongeot, and indicated its features. "A court for ring-tennis. Another. Here, in the centre, ample room for calisthenics and games. At the other end, two large dressing-rooms. Nudism will be obligatory here, but en route to the château costume must be worn. It goes without saying that today everything is very primitive: there is so much to be done, and so little money with which to do it; but give us a few months, and you shall see!"

I thought he was a visionary and a dreamer until I saw what had been accomplished four months later.

We walked back to the château. "Here is a photograph of me in the Merrills' book. Good, isn't it?" It showed de Mongeot, nude, balancing a huge ball over his head. "Here is something that will amuse you. Mr. Wang, the Chinese who used to be connected with Freilichtpark Klingberg, in Germany, has written a book on nudism in his own language."

He showed it to me. The Chinese characters meandered down the page and were interspersed with names familiar to me, printed vertically in Roman characters.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

"See," said my host, "he is saying something about me," and he indicated: "D

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T." "Evidently there are no characters for our European names among the Chinese. He writes 'Zimmermann,' 'Gleschendorf,' and 'Reichsverband für Freikörperkultur' in the same way. And here is one of his illustrations."

I laughed, for a half-tone cut of nudists at play was printed over a caption consisting of three Chinese characters resembling a tangle of exclamation points.

"Here is our visitors' book. You will visit us next Sunday, won't you? After you have been with us, you must write something in it."

"I shall be delighted to."

"We do not have so many visitors as the Germans, whose nudist organizations are better known, but we have had Americans, English, Italians, and, of course, many French. Perhaps you have heard of Henri Barbusse?"

The author of *Le Feu*? "Every educated American or Englishman has heard of Henri Barbusse," I said, "and some hundreds of thousands of us have read his great book."

"This is what Barbusse wrote after he visited the Sparta Club."

I read the brief inscription, and I translate it freely:

"I thank you, Monsieur de Mongeot, for having taught me how to gaze upon the naked female form without feeling lust."

A Naked World

The trim little maid opened the gate. "Excuse me, m'sieu," she commenced automatically, "I don't understand French."

"It's all right, Jenny," I said. "You and I will talk English. Where's Monsieur de Mongeot?"

"He's expecting you. Go right in."

I parked my car alongside of half a dozen others.

The scene at the château was more animated. Two or three men, clad in shorts, were working with shovels and wheelbarrows in what was to be a flower-garden. Several fully dressed women surveyed them.

"But I didn't bring any shorts!" I said to Monsieur de Mongeot.

"You won't need them." He led me to one of the dormitories and indicated one of the few cots not strewn with clothing. "You have brought a bathrobe? Good. You may undress here."

Attired in bathrobe and slippers, I followed him along the foot-path. "Are there many people here today?"

"Sixty or seventy: fewer than last week. The

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weather is cooler. But there will be more in the afternoon."

We turned into the nudarium. Four girls wore bathing-suits, and two of them had turned them down to the waist. A few men — the less athletic ones — clung to bathrobes. But the field which I had seen unpopulated a few days earlier was dotted with mixed groups tossing medicine-balls, playing ring-tennis, exercising, or chatting — stark naked. Two nude children were conspicuous among the adults. A gentleman of sixty used a cane and wore a hat — but nothing else. Fifty, sixty, seventy men and women of all ages, as bare as the days they were born, making no effort whatever to conceal themselves, and returning my astonished stare with friendly smiles!

"If you wish, you may leave your bathrobe in one of the dressing-rooms."

Did I wish? I did not know what I wished. Often, in imagination, I had pictured the incredible reality. Here, finally, I confronted it — and could not credit the testimony of my eyes.

I was hypnotized by the example of the others. I stumbled to the dressing-rooms, finding both used indiscriminately by men and women dressing and undressing. Nervously I divested myself of my bathrobe. Nobody paid me the slightest attention. I was naked — and nobody noticed it.

I steeled myself. I stepped through the open doorway. . . . I returned to the field less embarrassed than

A NAKED WORLD

I had been a minute earlier, when I had been one of the partly clad minority.

De Mongeot was awaiting me. "You will enjoy meeting another writer. Monsieur Julian Strange, this is Monsieur Louis-Charles Royer."

I shook hands with the author of *Au pays des hommes nus*, a volume of mingled truth and fiction which has sold a hundred and thirty-three thousand copies in its original edition and has been widely translated.

We spoke a few words.

A lady — quite naked — joined us.

"Madame Royer."

I bowed.

"In the event that you wish to talk English, here is an Englishman: Monsieur Crawford, of Bare-minn-gomb." I shook hands with an elderly visitor from Birmingham. "And now, if you will excuse me," said Monsieur de Mongeot, "I shall return to the château to greet the other guests."

Crawford and I were left together and surveyed each other with frank curiosity. "Hardly your first time," he said. "Why, you're brown as an Indian."

"To the waist only," I pointed out.

"I don't brown," he lamented. "I've been sitting out in the sun — what there is of it — since yesterday morning, and the only result is red splotches."

"How did you happen to come here?"

"I read the Merrills' book. We have nudist clubs

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in England now, but there isn't much sun at this time of year."

"Did you come alone?"

He was shamefaced. "My wife came with me, but she hasn't left the château. You see, she doesn't exactly approve of nudism."

I laughed. "You mean she wouldn't let you come here unchaperoned?"

"I'm afraid that's it," he admitted. "Puts me in a funny position, doesn't it? I'm fifty-four. . . . By George, it's cold! What do you say to tossing the medicine-ball?"

"I was just about to suggest it."

We found a ball.

"Messieurs, may I play, too?" A naked girl, who had been sitting on a blanket, came running to us.

"We shall be delighted, mademoiselle."

I was chilly, and I observed for the first time what I noted so frequently later on: that the condition of being naked in the sunlight filled me with an irresistible desire to exercise. My muscles welcomed their release from the bondage of clothes. I was suddenly energetic, and I fear that I threw the ball with too much force, for Crawford, long before I began to perspire, had had enough of it and went to huddle in his bathrobe.

Two more girls joined us — and then men — and a second ball, so that both balls were travelling rapidly around the circle. My chilliness vanished. I was perspiring freely, and not feeling the exertion.

One of the balls went crashing into the underbrush,

and simultaneously the ring-tennis players called out that they needed more players. Our game broke up, and I sat down on the grass with the girl who had joined us first.

"I am very warm," she said.

I noticed her strong accent. "Surely Mademoiselle is not French?"

"Oh, no! I am Dutch — from Amsterdam."

I switched to German. "Do you have nudist clubs in Holland?" I inquired.

She answered me in the same language, which, like many of her compatriots, she spoke fluently. "We Dutch are a broad-minded people. Yes: we have nudist clubs, and there will be more this year than last; but I am employed in Paris. Isn't it wonderful that there's a club like this so near Paris? Look: my third day here, and I am beginning to brown already!"

I looked at her, and she was coloured evenly — without the usual demarcations indicating where a bathing-suit had left off.

"You are an American — not English — isn't that so? Are there many nudist clubs in America?"

"I'm afraid there are few."

"What a funny people, you Yankees! Prohibition! How silly! Prohibition! And in your big country, with more than a hundred million people, only a little nudism!"

"My countrymen believe that the sight of the naked body is immoral."

She laughed. "Are you immoral? Am I? Look

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around. We are surrounded by nakedness. Which is more moral: to be here in the country, playing games, exercising, improving our health — naked — or to be in Paris, that wicked city, dissipating in the manner that most Americans do?"

The athletic instructor — naked — came to the centre of the field. "Messieurs! Mesdames! Calisthenics!"

The games and the conversation stopped instantly. In four long lines we performed familiar "setting-up" exercises for a hard-working half-hour.

I returned to my Dutch companion.

"After so much exercise," she said, "I ought to put on something. We'll be returning to the château in a few minutes, and it is still cool."

We walked together to the dressing-shed, and she emerged almost immediately attired in a bathing-suit.

Before that she had been merely a human being, and an intellectually congenial one. Now she stood before me partly dressed, and it was then, for the first time, that I realized she was a woman.

Author! Author!

The French nudists are more liberal than the Germans, and less so, I discovered later, than the Americans.

In the overwhelming majority of German clubs alcohol, tobacco, and meat are taboo. At some of them a visitor is not *persona grata* unless he is of the same

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political and religious faith as the members: unless he is a Socialist, a Nazi, a Communist,¹ a Protestant, an anti-Semite.

The Sparta Club permits smoking everywhere on the grounds except in the areas reserved for nudism, and everywhere in the château except in the dining-hall during meal-times.

The use of alcohol is not prohibited. That could hardly occur in a country whose public schools are required to teach the healthful properties of French wines. *Vin blanc* and *vin rouge* may be purchased with meals.

The fare is vegetarian, but its *suppléments* invariably offer a meat dish. I append the bill of fare of the meal of which I partook:

DEJEUNER

10 FCS.

Salade

Pommes de terre Béchamel

Haricots verts

Fromage

Rhubarbe

SUPPLÉMENTS

Cote de Bœuf rotie 5.00

Œufs (les 2) 2.50

Crème fraîche 1.50

Café 1.00

¹ I write of the days immediately preceding the advent of Hitler.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

The most popular beverage was soft cider.

The food was well prepared, and since it was served in courses, the whole meal was appetizing.

Costume is obligatory in the château. I wore bathrobe and slippers. A young woman who sat next to me wore a bathing-suit. An older woman on my other side was fully and fashionably dressed, and scattered about four long tables were men and women in every variation of complete costume between the two extremes. There were many who had obviously not disrobed and did not intend to do so: non-nudist visitors are permitted at the club provided that they do not approach the reserved grounds.

I enjoyed the meal: the morning's vigorous exercise had given me an appetite; and I relished a cigarette afterwards, too. The sun had become much hotter, and I returned to the nudarium to bask in it. Nobody was chilly any longer. Bathrobes had disappeared. Two of the four girls who had worn bathing-suits had discarded them, and the other two were attired only in trunks.

Exercise on a full stomach was unthinkable. The nudists gathered into groups, chatting, laughing. A few of them retired unsociably into far corners to sleep.

And then occurred an extraordinary episode which would have been impossible at a later date. Mrs. Crawford, wife of the Briton whom I had met in the morning, broke the rules by coming to the nudarium fully dressed. She was accompanied by a female friend, fully dressed and carrying a parasol.

Through her lorgnette she surveyed the fully dis-

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closed forms reposing on the grass. "Oh, Mr. Strange," she called, "do come here!"

I was quite naked, and I was atrociously embarrassed. In later months, when I had become more accustomed to nudity — my own as well as that of others — I did not object to the presence of persons in street attire — provided, however, that I knew them to be nudists. But upon my first visit to the Sparta Club I was a novice, and I was aware that the invaluable *Book of Etiquette* contained no suggestions for dealing with a problem like mine.

I debated fleeing. I debated lighting a Murad.

"Do come here, Mr. Strange!" she called again. The two elderly ladies had seated themselves comfortably in the shade and did not propose to leave it.

Nonchalantly — or with a fair imitation of a composure which I was far from feeling — I rose and strolled over.

"Mrs. Newberry — also English — Mr. Julian Strange," she introduced, and continued on the same breath: "Oh, Mr. Strange, I've read some of your books, and I do so much want to discuss them with you!"

It is correct for an author to blush when his books are mentioned. If I blushed on that occasion — and I am certain that I did — the blush broke all previously recognized long-distance records, for it must have extended from my scalp to my soles. I shifted my weight from one foot to the other. I clenched and unclenched my hands — having no pockets in which to place them.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

Mrs. Newberry gazed at me through *her* lorgnette. I remarked: "Ah!"

"What are you writing now, Mr. Strange?" pursued my tormentor.

For the life of me, I cannot recall how or what I answered. I may casually have brushed a fly off my abdomen and made an intelligible reply; or I may have stuttered and stammered like a schoolgirl with stage-fright. There are moments in life that are so exquisitely painful that the imagination boggles at re-creating them.

She looked at me — all of me — with the expression to be expected of an admiring reader. "When I return to England, I'm going to tell all of my friends that I met you. They'll be so interested!"

I squirmed.

"I'm so sorry I haven't one of your books with me, Mr. Strange. I'd ask you to autograph it for me."

My presence of mind returned in that instant. "As you see, Mrs. Crawford," I said subtly, "I have no fountain-pen," and with those words I turned and fled.

The French are an intuitive race. The members of the Sparta Club knew little English, and none of them, I was sure, had understood the full significance of the episode, but a few minutes later, when I was playing ring-tennis, a young Frenchman came to my side to remark in an undertone: "Monsieur de Mongeot has already learned of it. It will not happen again, Monsieur Strange. See: she has vanished."





RETURN TO PARIS

I expressed my gratitude.

“It was strictly against the rules! Next week there will be a sign reserving this area for complete nudity exclusively!”

On the following Saturday I found Raymond Pallier hard at work painting the sign, and I photographed him at it.

The result is the frontispiece of this book.

Return to Paris

Back to Paris, after an excellent meal, in the cool of the evening. . . .

I had played hours of ring-tennis. Ring-tennis is a highly variable game, and no two sets of rules agree. It is played with a rubber ring, a balloon, a basketball, or a heavy medicine-ball. There is a net — or it may be merely a rope stretched between two posts — and it may be six feet or seven feet or ten feet from the ground. The ring or the ball must be thrown underhand — or must be thrown side-hand — or may be hurled overhand. There may be limed lines dividing the ground like a tennis-court, or there may be no distinction whatever between “good” and “out.” There may be a single player on each side, or there may be half a dozen.

Ring-tennis is to be found on shipboard and in all nudist clubs. It is productive of good humour, much perspiration, and sprained knuckles.

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After I had lamed two fingers, I had wandered down to the brook. A pretty girl — naked — was bathing in it and waved to me gaily.

“How’s the water?”

“Cold — but not too cold. Monsieur, won’t you give me a shower-bath?” She indicated the battered sprinkling-can which stood at the edge of the stream.

“*Avec plaisir, mademoiselle.*” I filled the can, raised it high in the air so that the water would fall with force, and emptied it over her several times while she shivered her delight. Then I joined her in the tiny stream, ducked my head under, splashed about for a few minutes, and emerged to dry sociably with her on the grass.

“You are an American?” she inquired.

I pleaded guilty.

She looked at me wonderingly. “You are the only American who has been here since the Merrills visited us two years ago. *Dites moi*, do the Americans love only vees-kee — and do they all hate nudism? . . .”

I had returned to the dormitory to dress. I slipped off my bathrobe. Miracle of miracles: the parts of my body which I had always concealed from the sun were beginning to redden after only a few hours of exposure to it! I felt tired, but I felt amazingly well.

A sleeping form in the next cot had turned over, and a girl had stared at me for a few seconds. I did not interest her, for she turned back and went to sleep again. . . .

During the afternoon at least twenty persons had come to me and had begged for a lift back to Paris.

RETURN TO PARIS

The French are thrifty: to make the trip in the special autobus would cost thirteen francs; to make it in the train would cost about as much and entailed a four-mile uphill and downhill walk.

"Monsieur is driving back to Paris tonight?"

"Yes."

"May I ask Monsieur a favour? Will Monsieur take me along — just to the nearest Métro station?"

I could not answer: "No," and I must have given an affirmative reply to at least twenty persons before the evening meal. Then I cast my troubles on Monsieur de Mongeot's broad shoulders. "I have room for exactly six," I explained. "You choose the six."

Next to me he placed the pretty girl whom I had met in the brook, and to the rear of the car he assigned five other persons.

The autobus, jammed to capacity, started before we did. We roared past it on the first steep hill.

The moon shone. The girl at my right had much to say. I did not drive too rapidly.

Thoughtful friends in America had warned me that nudists were "freaks." I turned to the pretty girl. "Who are you, and why do you come to the Sparta Club?"

"I am a '*dactylo*,' monsieur: a stenographer," she answered. "I am one of eight children. Every centime that I make goes to help support the younger ones. The Sparta Club is inexpensive. My mother gives me back enough of my wages to belong to it. I come here every week-end. It is the greatest joy I have in life."

“How so?”

“I work indoors, monsieur. I am hidden from the sun in a newspaper office from early morning until late afternoon. I come to the Sparta Club. I take off my clothes. I lie in the grass. I look at the blue sky—it is the only time I see it. I play. I bask. I sleep. I relax completely. I return to the *bureau* browner—and fresher—and stronger. Now that I know what it is like, I do not know how I could go through with my work if I could not return to the sun Saturdays and Sundays. I shall have two weeks’ vacation this summer. If I can afford it, I shall go to the Club de Loumède, the maritime branch of the Sparta Club, and spend my two weeks there. I have never seen the Mediterranean. I so much want to swim in the Mediterranean, the blue Mediterranean; but it is so far away, and travel is so expensive.”

“What is the Club de Loumède?”

“It’s like this one, only nicer, so they say. A big château; fine grounds; the hot southern sun in which to play naked; and the Mediterranean!”

I chose to tempt her. I said: “I shall be starting for the Riviera in two weeks. I shall find out more about the Club de Loumède, and if other reports are as good as yours, I shall probably go there first. I shall drive through Burgundy and the valley of the Rhône, which are so beautiful. I shall stop at Avallon, which is heaven on earth, and at Aix-en-Provence. And then, perhaps, the Club de Loumède.”

I could not look at her face, for I was forced to

keep my own eyes on the road, but unlike my non-nudist female acquaintances, so many of whom had embarrassingly offered to accompany me, she made the correct reply. She answered steadily: "I wish you a very pleasant trip, monsieur."

"Freaks"? Perhaps; but freaks of a class with which my American friends had not reckoned.

We had been conversing in low voices. I subdued my tones even more. "My guests in the back seats: who and what are they?"

She whispered: "The old married couple are charming people."

"What does he do?"

"Wholesale merchant. One of the young men is a lawyer; the other is an engineer. The young girl is a '*dactylo*,' like me."

Then we talked about Rubens, whom I do not particularly like, and Rembrandt, whom I do, and French "*idiotismes*," which are far stranger than corresponding idioms in the Anglo-Saxon, and why "*tilleul*," which means only "linden tree," should be the most beautiful word in the French language — which it is. . . .

At the Place de la Concorde station of the Métro I dropped my passengers, who thanked me effusively and hoped to see me the following week-end.

I drove slowly along the rue de Rivoli. . . .

It was time to go to my hotel, but I felt far too energetic to do so. I parked the car in the Place Vendôme and walked up the rue de la Paix to the Place de

l'Opéra. I turned into the boulevard des Italiens and the boulevard Montmartre.

A slinky little man came up to me and thrust a sheaf of photographs into my hand. He said: "Would Monsieur be interested in some postcards *tout à fait galantes?*"

I said: "I am a nudist."

He fled from me as the Devil flees from holy water.

Mrs. Crawford Goes Nudist

The English-language newspapers publish hints on "What to Do in Paris" — though visitors would be more grateful for supplementary hints entitled "How to Find Time to Do It." But neither problem confronted me. My week-days were given up to enjoyment of the most enjoyable city in the world; my week-ends were dedicated to the Sparta Club. Monday mornings found me invariably refreshed; on Saturday mornings I took stock of myself, and while I could hardly qualify as a Tired Business Man, I did qualify as a Tired Man of Leisure. And then came forty-eight hours of the Sparta Club to send me back to Paris with my eyes bright, my step quickened, and my energy regained.

"How do you do, m'sieu?" said Jenny, as she opened the gate for me Saturday morning. ("M'sieu" was her one French word, and she never failed to use it.) "So you're back with us again? There's going to be a big crowd today. Isn't it a scorcher?"

"That's why I came so early, Jenny."

MRS. CRAWFORD GOES NUDIST

She closed the gate behind me. "There are lots of people here already. They've been arriving all morning. Go right up to the dormitory, m'sieu, and get undressed."

I needed no second invitation. I hurried out of my sticky clothes as rapidly as I could. In bathrobe and slippers — the latter much the worse for their previous encounter with the mud — I hastened to the brook. There were four strangers in the tiny spot which, for lack of a better name, I must call the "swimming-hole," and they almost filled it. But nudists do not stand upon formalities. I slipped off my bathrobe, jumped in, splashed in what little water was not being monopolized by the other bathers, and emerged presently, shivering and dripping wet, but gloriously refreshed.

The sun shone hot overhead. Dressed, I had minded it. Naked, I welcomed it. To bathe, to exercise, to bask, to bathe again, and to chat with congenial people between times: in what happier way can one spend a blistering summer's day?

With my bathrobe over my arm I walked to the nudarium.

"Bon jour, Monsieur Strange!"

"Comment ça va, Monsieur Strange?"

"Monsieur Strange! Allo! Allo!"

A dozen voices greeted the appearance of that rarest of all rare birds, an American nudist.

I was overwhelmed with hospitality. The ring-tennis players stopped their game. "Come and play with us, Monsieur Strange!" A coterie passing a medicine-ball

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paused invitingly. "Monsieur Strange, we need one more!" Two girls stretched on the grass rose to a sitting position to welcome me.

But I had eyes for only one apparition. I shook hands in a daze. I responded to words of greeting with conventional phrases. I declined all invitations — and I walked to the other end of the field, where, incredibly, I had discerned an unfamiliar figure in the grass.

I stood before her. Never before had I seen her without her clothes; never had I expected to see her without them. I could not believe my eyes: she was not wearing a stitch!

"Mrs. Crawford, I believe?"

"Oh, how do you do, Mr. Strange?"

"May I sit down with you?"

"Please do."

I stared at her white, untanned body from head to foot. "Mrs. Crawford, do you mean to tell me that you have gone nudist?" She smiled and nodded. "But I thought you hated it!"

"I used to."

"Please, please tell me how you came to change your mind."

"When the Merrills' book came out, my husband became interested in nudism."

"Yes; he told me that."

"He heard of this organization. He subscribed to their monthly periodical, *Vivre*. You have seen it, haven't you?"

"Of course."

MRS. CRAWFORD GOES NUDIST

"It has pictures of naked people: men and women together. I thought it was terrible. I used to tell him to stop reading that dirty magazine."

"Why did you think it was terrible?"

"Because the people were naked."

"Was there anything improper or suggestive in the poses?"

"No; quite the contrary; but they didn't have any clothes on: none at all."

"Go on."

"One day Mr. Crawford said he wanted to come here. I thought he was insane. I wouldn't allow it. He argued. Finally I said that if he came, I'd come, too, to keep my eye on him. He couldn't come any other way, so he agreed to that."

"Oh!"

"We argued so much crossing the Channel that neither of us was seasick — and we're wretched sailors, both of us. We argued all the way to Paris. Before we stepped into the train for Mantes, I said: 'Joseph, it's your last chance to turn back!' As we stepped into the car which had been sent to meet us at the station, I said: 'Joseph, you'll never have the courage to go through with it!'"

"He did, though, didn't he?"

"He surprised me, and I've known that man thirty years. When he went to the nudarium, I followed him. I wanted to see what he was up to. They told me I wasn't allowed there, but I came back in the afternoon."

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I nodded reminiscently. "I seem to recall that you did."

"After nearly all of the others had left last Sunday, we stayed on. Joseph and the few who stayed went to the nudarium every day. They'd come back for meals looking so completely unembarrassed — and so comfortable in the hot weather — and so healthy — that I couldn't understand it. Finally I decided to try it myself. Well, here I am."

"And you like it?"

She leaned back in the life-giving sunlight. "I love it!"

"Open your eyes, Mrs. Crawford. Look at me! I'm looking at you! I am naked. You are naked. Are you embarrassed? Are you shocked?"

"Not at all. It's funny, but I'm not bothered a bit."

I shook hands with her. "Bully for you!" I lay down at her side and clasped my hands comfortably under the nape of my neck. I turned my head in her direction. "Mrs. Crawford," I said, "last week you wanted to discuss my books with me, and I didn't feel particularly keen about it. *Now — now —* I'll discuss them — or anything else — just as long as you like!"

The Dormitory

A long, happy Saturday, which would have been a torture had I been compelled to go about clothed in the heat. It was not until nearly time for the evening meal that I returned to the dormitory to dress.

THE DORMITORY

I made a discovery. My clothes had vanished.

Two or three other persons were in the dormitory, and I suspected a practical joke. "Messieurs, have you seen my clothes?"

"*Mais non, monsieur.*"

"Do you know anything about them?"

"*Rien du tout, monsieur.*"

I ran downstairs. "Jenny, what on earth has happened to my clothes?"

"Oh, m'sieu, didn't they tell you?"

"Not a word."

"Madame thought you'd prefer a private room all to yourself, so we moved your clothes while you were out."

"Where did you put them?"

She led me to the second storey. "This is the finest room in the house. It's Monsieur de Mongeot's room when there are no guests here. It costs more than the dormitory, of course, but you'll be more comfortable here."

I did not think at all. What followed was purely automatic. "Jenny," I said, "the essence of nudism is democracy. When I go to a hotel in Paris, I ask for a good room. When I go to a nudist club, I object to being made more comfortable than the other members."

Jenny's eyes were shining. "That's fine of you, m'sieu!"

"You may tell Madame that I will pay for this room whatever she is accustomed to charge for it — and I will sleep in the dormitory."

Jenny helped me to carry my belongings up another flight of stairs.

The floor devoted to the plebeians was crowded. The Dutch girl, an early arrival, had set up a cot in the hall directly next to the window, where she could have an abundance of fresh air. Little heaps of clothing showed which cots in the dormitories themselves had been pre-empted.

Unembarrassed by the presence of two naked men, who, like me, had decided to dress before dinner, the little maid helped me dispose of my garments on the nearest vacant cot.

“Will this one do, m’sieu?”

“Any one will do, Jenny. . . .”

I had an excellent appetite and ate heartily.

It grew dark, and the members gathered into knots to chatter. Magazines — including all of the German, Swiss, and Spanish nudist periodicals — passed from hand to hand. Two men in a corner argued an abstruse question of economics. A woman, seated at the writing-desk, penned a long letter.

Twenty of the younger members sat down side by side at a long table to play a game. For the benefit of psychologists interested in the diversions of wayward youth I mention that an identical game is played in America, where it is known as “Up Jenkins!” A coin is passed from hand to hand. At a signal the team with the coin raises its clenched hands. At another signal they crash simultaneously onto the table. And the ob-

THE DORMITORY

ject of the game is for the opposing team to determine under which hand the coin is hidden.

Nothing more innocent could well be imagined — and in accordance with the rules requiring dress in the château, the participants were clothed.

Nudity, however, could not be prevented in the dormitories. One of the few sensible habits of the human animal is that of disrobing before going to sleep, and the seven women and five men who occupied the west dormitory did so, talking and laughing. They had spent the day in each other's company naked. There was no false modesty and nothing to which the most moral could have objected as they dropped their garments and prepared for bed. A nude girl at the wash-basin concentrated on cleaning her teeth. A nude man, glancing around to see if he was observed, stealthily secreted his shaving-kit under his pillow. He caught my eyes on him and raised his finger to his lips in a gesture entreating silence. On a previous occasion one of the girls had hidden his shaving-brush. . . . Near a window a man and a woman continued a debate which had been begun downstairs, but it could not last long. After a day of strenuous exercise rest had its attractions for all of us. From everywhere came shouts: "*Éteignez les lumières!*"

"Lights out! . . ."

I lay on my back, settling myself to sleep. My cot was less comfortable than my bed in Paris — and next to it was no bell-push summoning a *valet de chambre*,

no telephone, no pitcher of water, no bedside lamp — but I had no desire to change. I had returned to nature and was content.

Quiet. . . . A deep, restful quiet.

I woke in the middle of the night. The moon was shining in at a window, illuminating the sleeping forms.

I glanced the length of the dormitory. Most of my fellow-nudists, unlike me, wore neither pyjamas nor nightgowns, preferring to sleep naked. On the next cot my neighbour had flung back her blankets, and full in the faint light I beheld the bare torso and swelling breasts of a young woman. I gazed at them in profound, selfless admiration, wondering why the rest of the world thought of the naked beauty of woman only as a stimulant to lust.

I slept. . . .

In the morning a delegation came to my cot.

“Monsieur has slept well?”

“Excellently, thank you.”

“Monsieur finds himself in his usual good health?”

“Oh, even more so!”

“We have a request to make of Monsieur.”

“Make it.”

“It is most admirable of Monsieur to be democratic and sleep in the dormitory. It is splendid! It is *vraiment magnifique!* But the next time that Monsieur feels the desire to be democratic, will not Monsieur be so good as to be democratic in one of the private chambers which has a good door?”

THE DORMITORY

“ Why? In Heaven’s name, why? ”

“ It desolates us to inform Monsieur — ”

“ Well? Well? ”

“ Monsieur snores.”

LOUMÈDE



Corniche des Maures

MONSIEUR CHARLES-AUGUSTE BONTEMPS, *Délégué à la Propagande*, gave me a letter of introduction before I left Paris.

“Where are you going?”

“Burgundy. Dauphiné. Provence.”

“There are clubs affiliated with the *Amis de Vivre* almost everywhere. There is a group in Lyons. Here is its address. There is a group in Nice. Write to the secretary. There is a club near Saint-Tropez. There are two groups in Marseilles. Here is the address of one of them. They have the use of an island near the Château d’If.”

The Château d’If! What would Edmond Dantès, subsequently Count of Monte Christo, have thought if, peering from his cell in the dreary prison, he had discerned groups of naked men and women clambering over the rocks, baking themselves in the brilliant Mediterranean sunshine, cooling off in the water of the deep-creviced *calanques*? Would his ingenuity have led him to escape sooner, or would his sense of propriety have

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caused him to hide in his darkest corner? Once free, would he have sped away in search of fortune, or would he, perhaps, have dealt with his prison pallor first of all by joining the nudists?

But Monsieur Bontemps was still speaking. "Is there any chance of your visiting south-western France?"

"A very good chance."

"There are groups in Toulouse and Perpignan." He was busily scribbling names and addresses on a sheet of paper. "There is a very active group in Bordeaux."

"The Club de Loumède —"

"That is the one near Saint-Tropez. Write to the secretary, Monsieur Haimovith."

"I can go to any of these places and be received?"

"You have paid your dues as a member of the Sparta Club? You have your membership card, with your photograph and your signature?"

I produced it.

"That is all that is required. You will be welcome everywhere. Do you expect to visit northern France?"

"Perhaps in September; not now."

"There are many centres there — and in Belgium and Holland, too. I will give you their addresses whenever you want them. . . ."

And now, after a leisurely trip through the valley of the Rhône, after a pleasant stay with friends between Marseilles and Toulon, I was driving east along the Corniche des Maures.

A corniche is a cornice, and the Corniche des Maures

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is the "Cornice of the Moors." The phrase gives but an indifferent picture of a narrow road, which, branching off from the National Highway at La Verrerie, turns boldly toward the sea, and onward from Le Lavandou clings to the face of the cliffs as a moulding clings to a vertical wall.

"*Corniche*" is highly fanciful. Sometimes the road, well-paved but completely unfenced, rises dizzily hundreds of feet above the Mediterranean; sometimes, twisting and turning, so that there is no hundred-yard straight-away anywhere in its length, it dips to sea-level, and the mountains loom over it. It is a cornice and a ledge and a moulding and a baseboard — and it is no place for a driver whose control of his car is not sure.

The country interested me as I gyrated through it. Gone were the gentle hills, the sycamores, the horse-chestnuts of central France. Fewer were the olive trees which had been so abundant between Lyons and the sea. After Toulon came the first palmettos, mingling strangely with evergreens of many varieties, and then increasing numbers of mimosas, figs, stone-pines, mulberries, and laurels. And beyond, softening the contours of the jagged granite, stretched solid miles of vineyards.

White marble palaces shone in the sun in the most impossible locations: they crowned precipices; they were tucked into nooks and crannies; they were alternately revealed and hidden as the road writhed in and out. Spectacular views of sea and mountains, gorges

CORNICHE DES MAURES

and valleys and streams succeeded one another, and I was made painfully aware of the only unpleasant feature of being one's own driver: unless one came to a complete halt (which I did repeatedly), it was impossible to gaze at the scenery without courting immediate disaster.

The Corniche des Maures begins to climb as it leaves the Baie de Cavalaire. At La Croix, where I left it, it had risen a hundred feet. At Ramatuelle, where I neared the end of my journey, I had climbed four hundred feet more, and Baedeker reminded me, with his emphatic star, that there was "a glorious view."

The peninsula of Saint-Tropez, whose exact centre is Ramatuelle, thrusts a widespread hand into the Mediterranean half-way between Toulon and Cannes. The thumb is Saint-Tropez. The joints of the curved first finger are Cap Saint-Pierre, Cap de Salins, and Cap du Pinet. The other fingers are Cap Camarat, Cap Taillat, and Cap Lardier. Between the first and second fingers, overlooked by Ramatuelle, which might be likened to a prominent middle knuckle, lies the Plage de Pampelone, a north and south stretch of clean, smooth sand, sheltered from all winds save the warm eastern and south-eastern ones, and offering miles of superb beach to any person original enough to prefer it to better-advertised localities.

A turn near the old walled village into a narrow side road; a turn into one still narrower, and warning placards informed me that I was on the strictly private property of the Club de Loumède.

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It is a large property: it occupies half a square mile. I drove between vineyards for some minutes before I reached the dignified club-house.

A young man came out to greet me.

I identified myself.

“Monsieur Strange?” he said; “we have been expecting you. I am the secretary and physical director: Haimovith. Please make yourself quite at home.”

Thoughts on “Naturisme”

The Club Naturiste et Gymnique de Loumède (to give it its full name) is perhaps the most extraordinary nudist club in the world. It is the creation of one man; and he created it because he was too busy to go far away from his office.

Maurice S—, a wealthy builder of Fréjus, believed in nudism. Living in an area subjected to the demoralizing effects of too many travellers, too much money, and too much dissipation, he believed in its steadying influence. He practised it with his wife and his young children.

But the nearest centre of any consequence was at Marseilles, and too distant for the builder, who operates extensively in Saint-Raphaël, Sainte-Maxime, and Saint-Tropez.

Week-ends at Marseilles did not attract him. He was too busy to go far from his headquarters, and, like most Frenchmen, he objected to being separated from his family.





THOUGHTS ON "NATURISME"

Since he could not go to a nudist club, he decided to make a nudist club come to him. He bought the estate of Loumède, a short run from Fréjus, modernized its large château, laid out an elaborate stadium, employed a physical director, gardeners, workmen, and half a dozen house servants, and offered the whole, as a going affair, to the Sparta Club for the nominal rental of one thousand francs — forty dollars — a year. The Sparta Club accepted the offer — naturally — and the man who refused to emulate the resignation of Mahomet will be able to bring up his children in the healthful atmosphere he has chosen for them.

The château is charming. It is well elevated, and a pillared terrace commands a magnificent view of the Mediterranean. Large, comfortable rooms survey the surrounding country or the sea. The spacious grounds include more than eighty acres of forest, besides many acres of vineyards and gardens, and run within a mile of the water, from which point a private road, open to the members, leads to a splendid beach.

"You must let me show you our grounds," said Monsieur Haimovith, a Serb naturalized as a Frenchman. "We grow our own vegetables. We make our own *vin rosé*. It is good wine. You will have some of it at dinner. We make so much more of it than we can use that we sell our surplus to dealers.

"Here are the old farm buildings. We are making them over into dormitories."

I said nothing. There was nothing for me to say. The farm buildings and the cattle they might have sheltered

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could have made the estate more than self-supporting; yet the owner, without regret, was sacrificing them to make the club attractive to impecunious visitors.

“This is the stadium.”

It was extremely ambitious. Courts for ring-tennis, a variety of devices for exercise, and a quarter-mile running-track were features of an oval which would have filled the demands of a not too ambitious university.

“Here a minimum of trunks for men or trunks and brassières for women must be worn. Here we meet mornings and afternoons, naturists and nudists together, for class calisthenics.”

Again I did not comment. “Naturists” are queer folk, and I fear I am out of sympathy with them. They are neither flesh nor fowl: they believe neither in the modesty of clothes nor in the greater modesty of nakedness. They believe in heliotherapy, but are filled with inhibitions — hence expose themselves to the sun wearing partial and fanciful costumes, which are worse than none. Their women too often array themselves in suggestive garb: underwear and nothing else; trunks, open-work chemises, and nothing else. Their garments would be less objectionable if they revealed either more or less; as they are, they are erotic in a manner that the complete nakedness of the nudists is not.

The naturist women use make-up too freely: in an atmosphere which they soak with sex, it fits into the scheme. They lead their men into flirtations which would be unthinkable in places where total nudity

THOUGHTS ON "NATURISME"

reigns. They do not patronize the public beaches, where their costumes would be ridiculous, even though semi-nudity is the rule at French beaches. Instead they congregate on their well-advertised island of Villenes, in the Seine below Paris, where the newspaper photographers can conveniently follow them, and they obtain temporary footholds in the French nudist clubs which hope, by dividing their grounds, to please everybody.

"Are there any naturists here?" I asked Monsieur Haimovith with some trepidation.

"You have picked an unfortunate week-end. It is still too early in the season. You will be the only guest; and you will be alone with Monsieur and Madame S—, who will arrive this evening with their children."

"I shall not call that an unfortunate week-end," I said.

Monsieur Haimovith led me to a wire fence. "The dead-line," he explained. "Naturist members are not allowed to cross this wire."

"Good," I said.

"Another wire is just out of sight among the trees. On the other side of it complete nudity is obligatory. Nudist members — *gymniques* — must undress after passing the second wire. They must re clothe themselves before passing it on their return. The ground between the two is a no man's land where promenading is not permitted."

"Highly ingenious," I commented.

I walked through part of the pine forest with him. The ground was carpeted with pine needles. The trees

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cast shadows everywhere, save in the glades thoughtfully created here and there for sunworshippers like me. "Everything but water," I said.

Monsieur Haimovith smiled. "The Mediterranean is at our front door."

"I didn't think of that! That should supply enough water to satisfy everybody! Do you swim in it naked?"

"Daily."

"A private beach?"

"We don't need it. We are careful to offend nobody. By tacit agreement the police do not come to vex us."

We walked back to the club-house. A most attractive eight-year-old girl came running out to meet me. "*Monsieur! Voyez, monsieur! Voyez donc! J'ai gagné la médaille!*"

It was Babette S—, who had just won a medal for excellence in her school work.

"I congratulate you," I said. "It is a very beautiful medal, and I'm sure you worked hard to win it."

It was pinned on her dress, and it flashed as she ran. "I worked so hard, monsieur, and now that I have won it, I am so proud! Excuse me just a minute, monsieur."

She ran into the house, and I wondered how she would solve her problem: whether the privilege of wearing the medal would make clothes attractive, or whether the nudism to which she had been educated would eventually conquer.

She reappeared in a few seconds, and it had not even occurred to her that there was a problem. She was quite naked.

Monsieur S—

Monsieur S—, a powerful, thick-set man in the neighbourhood of fifty, turned out to be a human dynamo. I had sensed how his impending arrival had tautened the atmosphere; his actual presence brought everything abruptly to concert pitch.

He inquired solicitously about my comfort; as president of the club he bade me welcome cordially; and he turned energetically to the problems awaiting him.

“The dormitories?”

“The work is progressing very well,” Monsieur Haimovith assured him.

“The stadium?” He turned to me. “You must come with me, Monsieur Strange, and see for yourself what we are doing.” He had ordered various improvements made on the athletic field and was eager to inspect them. He explained them to me while we walked about.

“This is a new club, Monsieur Strange. We are incorporated only a few days more than six months, and this will be our first season. We have accomplished much in a short time, *n'est-ce pas vrai?*” He hurried along without waiting for me to reply. “Your *voiture* is well taken care of, is it not?”

I told him it was housed in one of the farm buildings.

“Good,” he said. “We have so much to do, and so little time in which to do it.” He directed his steps back to the château. He barked orders to Monsieur Haimovith, who jotted them down on a pad. “The water-piping was in bad shape when we came here. We have

ripped it all out, and we are putting in new piping. We are improving the plumbing. We are building a flower-garden under the terrace. We are refurnishing part of the château."

Monsieur Haimovith had a sheaf of correspondence ready for him. The president of the club handled it with a dispatch which American business men would have commended.

He glanced at a letter. "Write him 'Yes.'" Another: "'Yes.'" He passed me a series of closely written sheets. "Read them, Monsieur Strange."

They were from a member of the Sparta Club who wished to spend her vacation at the Club de Loumède and feared she could not pay its very reasonable minimum charges.

Monsieur S— took the letter from my hands and gave it to the secretary. "Write her that she shall pay what she pleases: ten francs; five francs; one franc a day. Next."

Babette came stealing to my side. "Would Monsieur like to see my exercise books?"

Monsieur most emphatically would, and he spent a happy hour, while the sun sank lower, glancing through neat pages filled with irregular French verbs (whose idiosyncrasies, he feared, Babette knew better than he did), additions of columns of numbers in which the sevens, in accordance with the Continental custom, were distinguished from the ones only by the cross-lines drawn through them, and tables of French words whose spellings (as he knew but too well!) were tricky.

“ And how do you like going around without clothes, Babette? ”

“ Oh, monsieur, I love it! ” (The same reply was made by every one of the many children to whom I put the question.)

“ Aren't you sorry you can't wear the medal? You worked so hard to win it, and you can't pin it on anything now. ”

She nodded thoughtfully. “ I might tie it around my neck with a string — ”

“ Ah! ”

“ But that would never do. It is a beautiful medal, and it would be ruined when we go swimming in the sea. ”

Madame S—, my charming hostess, had overheard the last few words and came out to join us. “ She swims, monsieur, *comme un petit poisson* — like a little fish! You will never believe it until you have seen her. ”

“ I look forward to it, madame. ”

“ Tomorrow, if it is sunny, we shall go together. Eh, Babette? ”

“ Does Monsieur know how to swim? ”

“ Yes, I swim. ”

“ Won't we have fun! ”

We dined that night on the terrace, the S—s, Monsieur Haimovith, Babette, and I. The S—s' older child had not yet joined us. He was in school in Saint-Raphaël, and tomorrow morning his father would go to fetch him.

We drank the excellent home-made wine, the *vin*

rosé, which may be drunk immoderately, but which neither intoxicates nor makes the head heavy. We lighted cigarettes and stared at the Mediterranean. And the dark came gently, like a friend.

Only a few hours away, in Cannes, in Nice, in Mentone, in Monte Carlo, other Americans were dancing to jazz bands, playing roulette and baccarat, overeating and overdrinking in a desperate effort to make bearable the tedium of living.

My life was without tedium, and I did not envy them.

The Mediterranean

Early in the morning came half an hour of vigorous exercise for all of us. Scientifically Monsieur Haimovith led us through evolutions which made demands upon muscles of whose existence I had never been aware. I keep myself fit and was not fatigued by an unusually searching setting-up drill; but when, in accordance with instructions, I hung from a bar by my hands and executed complicated manœuvres with my legs, only a grim determination not to let the others, who had had more practice, beat me at it made it possible for me to continue at all. For a finale a brisk sprint around the track gave us all an excellent appetite for breakfast.

Monsieur S— glanced at his watch. "I shall drive to Saint-Raphaël. I shall be back with my son in time for luncheon."

Madame S— turned to me. "It is a beautiful morning. Shall we go swimming?"

"Delighted, madame."

In my car the three of us drove as near as we could to the water. Babette, seated between her mother and me, chattered incessantly; but I admit I was somewhat embarrassed. Except for the child, all of us had worn bathing-suits while exercising. We wore them now, and since we were to cross land which belonged to a neighbour, Babette, too, was similarly dressed.

What would occur when we reached the beach? It was one thing to be nude in the presence of a dozen or more nudists; it was quite another to disrobe in the company of a single adult of the opposite sex.

We left the car at the end of the road and picked our way through well-tended vineyards to the shore of the Mediterranean.

Babette hastened out of her single garment and ran, shouting and leaping, toward the sea.

Her mother turned to me. "*Vous quittez votre maillot, monsieur?*"

I replied that I would do whatever she did.

She nodded. "Good. But don't take off your bathing-suit until that peasant has gone." She indicated a man who, with two dogs, had followed us and was now pretending, at a distance of fifty feet, to be unaware of our presence. "He always follows," she whispered, "but it doesn't take him long to get tired of waiting. Let us sit on the sand and talk. He will go away soon."

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

I was greatly interested in the psychology of the situation. My hostess was a charming, cultured, well-bred woman. Quite properly she objected to displaying herself naked to the peasant, though she had known him by sight for months. On the other hand, she would disrobe with me without hesitation, though she had met me for the first time on the preceding afternoon. The important difference was that I was an avowed nudist, whose reactions could be predicted with certainty.

A few minutes proved that she had judged the peasant mentality correctly. The man had stared at the sea — and at us out of the corner of his eyes — as long as he dared. He whistled to his dogs and disappeared.

“Now,” said Madame S—. She dropped her bathing-suit, I slipped out of my trunks, and we ran to the surf, in which Babette was already swimming strongly.

“Brrrh! It’s cold!” she said.

“It’s not so cold as it was nearer Marseilles,” I commented. The water at the beaches to the west, where I had swum less than a week earlier, had been ten degrees chillier.

She dove in. “Cold!”

She was not a powerful swimmer, and I kept between her and the sea. “I’ve had enough,” she said soon.

She returned to the beach, and Babette and I frolicked in the water, splashing each other, ducking and coming up at unexpected places, and behaving generally like two healthy human beings who love swimming and give themselves up wholeheartedly to its delights.

“I’m going out, Babette. Come along.”

THE MEDITERRANEAN

"Oh, monsieur, I want to stay in."

"I can't keep an eye on you if I'm going to sun myself; and the surf is too rough to let you stay in it alone."

I picked her up, squirming and struggling, and deposited her on the sand.

"Here is a towel for you, monsieur," called Madame S—.

I joined her, and we lay side by side, baking deliciously in the hot sun, while Babette, like a little pagan, raced up and down naked, but did not re-enter the water.

"That was a fine dip!" I said.

Madame S— nodded. "How brown you are, monsieur!"

"I spent every week-end while I was in Paris at the Sparta Club."

Three persons appeared over the sand-dunes to the north. I rose hastily and offered my hostess my towel.

She did not move. "Don't trouble yourself, monsieur. They are nudists — like us."

I resumed my seat as the visitors came fully into sight: a man; his young wife; their girl child — all three nude.

"We have invited them to join the club," said Madame S—, "but they prefer to practise nudism alone."

They walked between us and the water and bowed as formally as if they — and we — had been fully clad. They disappeared to the south.

The sun was hot. We luxuriated in it.

Babette ran to us. "Please, monsieur, one more little dip?"

We swam together for a few minutes.

We left the surf, and dried almost instantly in the hot sun.

"Shall we dress?" asked Madame S— at length. Nearly two hours had elapsed.

The walking trio passed us again and bowed as formally as before.

We put on our bathing-suits and returned to the car comfortable and refreshed.

What a way to go swimming! Bathing-suits to the water's edge, the joy of nakedness in a tingling surf, a sun-bath, and then our bathing-suits, warm and dry, ready for us when we were about to leave!

In the afternoon we were a larger party, for Monsieur S—, his son (a lad a few years older than Babette), an older woman, and Monsieur Haimovith had joined us.

The children scampered up and down the beach, gloriously happy. The adults bathed and sunned; and bathed and sunned again.

Our dry, warm bathing-suits were waiting for us when we reluctantly decided to call it a day.

The Psychology of Nudism

That night, after the others had gone to bed, Monsieur Haimovith and I had a long talk.

"I have been connected with nudist clubs in Germany

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NUDISM

for many years," he said. "You may ask me anything you wish."

I nodded. "Let us begin, then, by agreeing that nudism is good; and let us discuss the aspects that give concern to its friends. I was warned, before I left America, that nudists were freaks. Thus far I have found the warning unjustified; but it is undoubtedly true that a movement of its character will draw to it certain elements which are less desirable than others."

"Undoubtedly," he agreed.

"For example, what is the difference between nudism and exhibitionism?"

"After what you have seen, you can answer that yourself."

"I have my own answer. I want yours."

"What is your answer, Monsieur Strange?"

"The nudist enjoys nakedness only in the presence of persons whom it does not offend; the exhibitionist enjoys only the opposite."

"I think I would accept that definition," he said slowly, "but I, myself, would base a definition on terms of sanity. The nudist is normal; the exhibitionist is not. The nudist practises nudism as a means to an end; the exhibitionist practises nudity — not nudism — as an end in itself. Through nudism you and I aim at mental, moral, and physical health — and the enjoyment that goes with it. The exhibitionist is not concerned with health. He practises nudity in order to draw to himself the attention of other people. He must be noticed. He will resort to anything to attract that notice."

“Have you found many of them in nudist clubs?”

“They are not at home there,” said Monsieur Haimovith decisively. “Yes, I have found them; and I have seen them go away after a few days. Nobody looked at them, and they became discouraged. They left, presumably to go to places where their behaviour would attract more attention. Nudists and exhibitionists are natural enemies.”

“That sounds quite logical,” I said.

“But there are other peculiar persons whom you may meet. There are central European superstitions — ”

“Such as?”

“I have met elderly men who firmly believed that exposing the genitals to sunlight would restore their lost forces.”

I laughed. “Perhaps it’s true.”

“Perhaps; but such gentry should not be allowed among the nudists. They will find sunlight on the roofs of their own houses — or at sanatoriums.”

“Isn’t it harsh to exclude from a club any well-behaved member who is likely to be benefited?”

Monsieur Haimovith shrugged his shoulders. “Perhaps it is harsh; but we must think of the good of the greatest number. The presence of men whose thoughts are centred on one such thing, and on that alone, is not conducive to a healthful moral atmosphere. It is your good fortune that you have met no such individuals. I, in the course of years, have encountered perhaps a dozen.”

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NUDISM

“Go on.”

“Then, too, there are the ‘*voyeurs*.’ ”

“The ‘*voyeurs*’ ?” (The word might be translated as the “lookers-on.”)

“Aged gentlemen whose only remaining sexual pleasure is that of gazing at the nudity of the young. They remove their clothes, because they would not be admitted otherwise; but they take no part in the normal activities of the clubs, and they may even avoid the sunlight. They merely sit at one side and stare.”

“Surely there are not many such.”

“Thank God, no. But I would do away with both classes by barring nudism to any man over sixty — unless he has practised it for ten years before reaching that age.”

“Don’t you admit its mentally healthful effects? Even if a man’s views and objects are wrong, nudism may help him.”

“It *will* help him,” said Monsieur Haimovith, “provided that he has sanity to begin with. You see, Monsieur Strange, we have returned to the point from which we started. It is only the person who is mentally disordered, the exhibitionist, the believer in superstitions, the *voyeur*, who is beyond help; and he should not come to us for it. It is on his account that all clubs reserve the right to expel any member summarily. It is rarely necessary to go so far, for the undesirable member seldom finds the atmosphere of nudism congenial. . . . Nudism is a great, enlightened movement. Its benefits are thoroughgoing. But we nudists have been so much at-

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

tacked that we are inclined to exaggerate our moral spotlessness, when, after all, we are quite human. Let us recognize the dangers we face, and stop worrying about our morals: they will take care of themselves; and let us emphasize the healthy joy of nudism: a joy which should be withheld from the few who are unable to partake of it in the proper spirit."

"In other words," I said, "nudism is not quite perfect."

"Certainly not," he admitted. "There are times when nudists descend to the morality of the clothed classes."

I went to bed with much to think about.

In the morning it was raining pitchforks, and I reluctantly prepared to leave. Nudism is no pleasure in bad weather.

The housekeeper presented my bill. I reproduce it for the benefit of those of my compatriots who prefer more conventional resorts.

NOTE A MONSIEUR STRANGE:

le 11	1 repas	10.
	1 l. vin	4.
	1 nuit	25.
le 12	1 café	1.50
	1 journée	25.
	2 café	3.
	1½ l. vin	6.
	1 nuit	25.
le 13	1 petit déjeuner	5.
		106.50

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NUDISM

I had occupied one of the finest rooms in the château. Including the customary gratuities, my week-end had cost me under five dollars.

The remembrance of things past—beyond recall. . . .

I little knew, when I wrote these happy pages, what tragedy a few weeks held in store.

Babette, the child who should have outlived all of us, is gone, and with her sudden and pitiable death the club which was created most of all for her ceased to exist. Those who survived had no heart to carry on in a place where every blade of grass recalled the pressure of her feet; where every nook and dell seemed about to echo with her innocent laughter.

I read over what I have written with the feeling that I gazed for a few hours into a lovely and unearthly mirage— and then saw it vanish into the blue Mediterranean.

VIENNA



The Anti-Nudist

THE DISTINGUISHED author who honours me by translating my writings for the Austrian public met me at the frontier. He is a brilliant and versatile man. His plays have been produced in Vienna and in Berlin; his prose fiction is voluminous; he does dramatic criticism for the Viennese papers when he is in the mood; and his newest book, a volume of poems, is before me at the moment.

I had written to him of my interest in nudism, and he had replied that he would arrange for a visit to one of the seven *Bünde* in Vienna.

"I'm afraid it can't be done," he said when after a day's journeying together it first occurred to me to bring up the subject. "Here's what they wrote me."

"Sehr geehrter Herr!

"In Beantwortung Ihres g. Schreibens v. 15. d. M. teilen wir Ihnen höfl. mit, dass einem vor langer Zeit gefassten Vorstandsbeschluss zufolge, nur Mitglieder in- oder ausländischer Nacktkultur-

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vereine, die sich mit giltiger Legitimation ausweisen, an unseren Veranstaltungen als Gäste teilnehmen können.

*“ Mit vorzügl. Hochachtung
“ BUND FÜR FREILICHTKULTUR ”*

With its numerous abbreviations, its conventional politenesses, and its excess of five-syllabled words, the letter was characteristically German.

I offer a translation:

“ Most honoured Sir!

“ In reply to your respected letter of the 15th inst. we courteously inform you that in accordance with a precaution which we have taken for a long time only members or members of foreign nudist clubs who present themselves with valid credentials are permitted to be guests at our meetings.

“ With profound respect . . . ”

“ That’s all right,” I assured him. “ I am a member of two French clubs, and there will be no difficulties. You’ll come along with me when I visit the *Bund*, won’t you? ”

“ Most emphatically not,” he replied. “ I disapprove of nudism.”

“ How interesting! Tell me why you disapprove. Have you ever visited the nudists? ”

“ I know all about them, Herr Strange. I wrote an article about them some years ago. Here it is. I brought it along for you to read.”

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

I put the article in my pocket. "I'd much rather hear your experiences from your own lips."

"*Wie Sie wollen.* One of the Viennese newspapers asked me to write an article about the nudists. I consented. In Vienna we have indoor swimming-pools which the nudist clubs rent on certain nights. I communicated with one of the clubs and told them what I wanted; and they agreed to let me attend one session — provided that I stripped, like everybody else."

"You didn't object to that?"

"Not at all — and I objected still less after I saw the other men. I had a better figure than most of them. I swam, and I asked questions, and I dressed myself, and I went home and wrote the article the editor wanted. And never, so long as I live, shall I visit the nudists again."

I opened my eyes wide. "Did something unpleasant happen? Did somebody offend you?"

"*Nein! Nein!* Nothing like that, Herr Strange!"

"Then what gave you such a decided aversion to the nudists?"

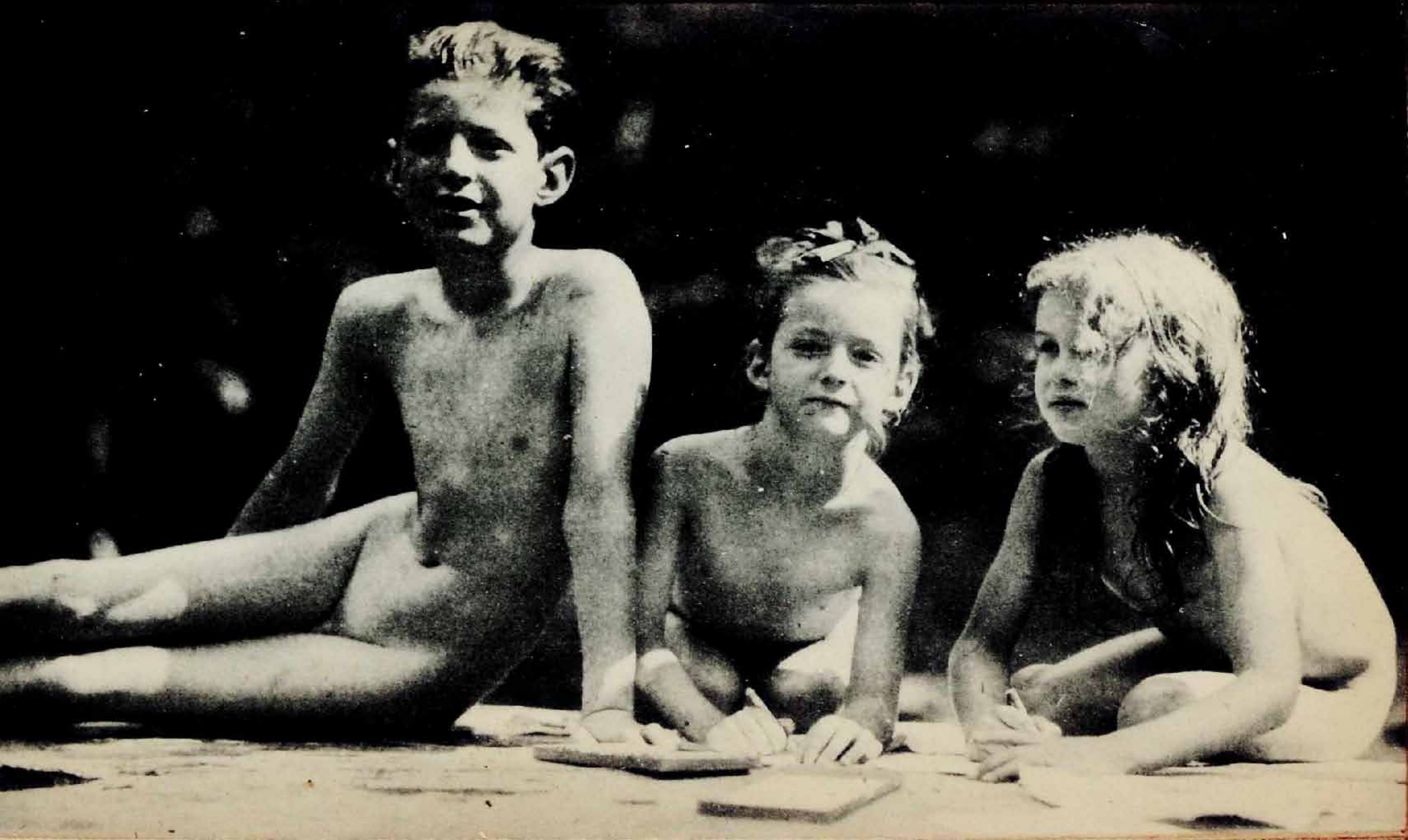
He looked at me with a desperate expression. "The women, Herr Strange! The women!"

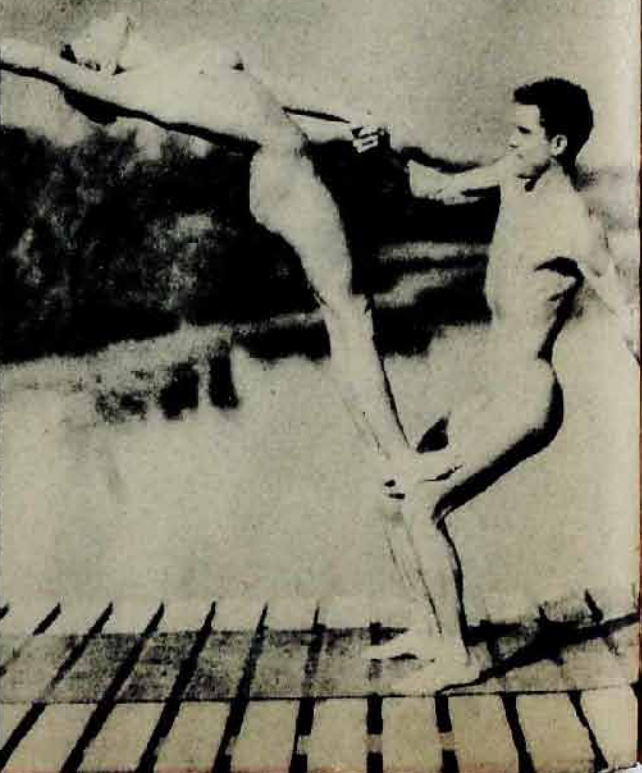
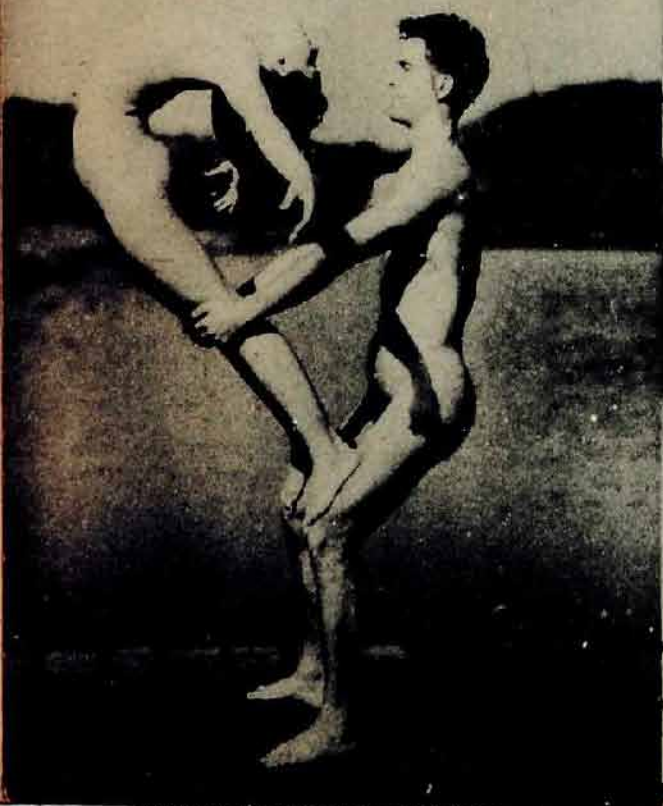
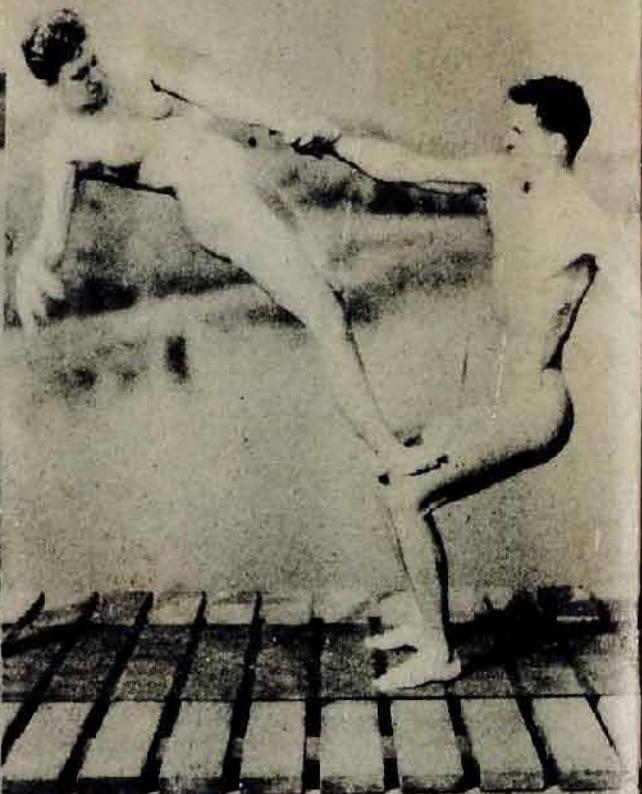
I was at my wits' end. "Was something wrong with them, Herr M—? Were they mis-shapen? Did they behave improperly?"

"*Ach, nein!*" he said. "It was just — just that they weren't women."

I was still in the dark and waited for him to continue.

"I am an unmarried man," he began, "and I shall





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probably never get married. It isn't that I don't fall in love; I have fallen in love repeatedly — so often that I have lost count. But I have rarely been in love with only one woman at a time, and I have never been in love with one woman long enough to wish to marry her."

I glanced at him. A handsome, intelligent face; a fine figure, made even more erect by gallant service as an officer in the Austrian army; a brilliant and resourceful mind: no wonder that he had succeeded with the ladies.

"In the course of my life," he pursued reminiscently, "I have had liaisons — many, many liaisons. I am conducting two liaisons at the present moment," he said without braggadocio.

"Go on."

"A pretty woman dressed — well dressed — is an adorable object. She has coquetry. She has charm. She has mystery. Such a woman I can love. Such a woman I *have* loved — *ach*, so often! A pretty woman naked — naked in a swimming-pool — is not adorable. She has no charm. She hides nothing, and there is nothing to hide. Such a woman I cannot love. Such a woman I do not even wish to see! I hate nudism!"

I could not control my laughter. "Has it ever occurred to you," I asked, "how infinitely various women can be — and are? Mother — daughter — wife — mistress — playmate: every woman, in the course of her life, can be all five of them. There are times when a woman is, above all else, something to be loved: something to be loved spiritually, or something to be loved

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physically; but there are other times when a woman is primarily a comrade, a good friend, a companion in healthy sport — ”

“ Naked in a swimming-pool? ”

“ Why not? ”

“ When I go swimming,” he said decisively, “ I look for water — not for women. When I am interested in women, I look for women — not a swimming-pool.”

“ Do you object to the presence of women in the water when you go swimming? ”

“ Certainly not,” he said vigorously, “ but they must be in bathing-suits! Even when she wears so little as a bathing-suit, a woman is still a mystery. Without it she is only a human being. She ceases to be a woman.”

He was rapidly getting the better of me, and I staked everything on one final argument. “ Some of the most charming women I know practise nudism — ”

He interrupted. “ Then they are safe against me! With such a woman I would not — I could not — have a liaison.”

“ Good heavens! ” I burst out, “ don't attractive women exist for any other purpose? ”

“ Of course not! What quaint ideas you Americans have! ”

“ But a comrade — ! ”

“ You and I are comrades — *Kameraden*. We are two men. But a woman — ! ”

“ I begin to understand,” I said, “ why Vienna is said to be the gayest of all cities.”

La Ville Qui Meurt

It is but a shadow of what it used to be. The Ringstrasse is not crowded. The cobbled streets are in sad disrepair. And Frau Sacher, of the famous restaurant, is dead.

Schönbrunn, where Napoleon lodged, where his son, the Duc de Reichstadt, died, where Franz Josef the First and Last began and ended a tragic life, has become a public park. The Kunsthistorisches Museum has lost its finest paintings to the Italians. The glories of the Empire are no more. But the Historical Museum of the City of Vienna remains as it was, vainly reminding a forgetful world that the Austrians more than once saved the whole of Occidental civilization from the Turk.

I asked a well-dressed man the way to a street. He replied: "*Ich steige ein und zeige Ihnen; und dann geben Sie mir was Sie freilich geben wollen* (I'll get in and show you; and then you'll give me whatever you're disposed to)." Twenty groschen — the equivalent of three cents — more than satisfied him, and the street I wanted turned out to be at the next corner. . . . The shops teemed with attractive merchandise at bargain prices. The customers had no money with which to buy. . . . I walked into a tobacconist's and said: "'*Jussuf, bitte.*" "Jussuf" is the name of a popular Austrian cigarette. Instead of giving me a pack the clerk handed me *a single cigarette* — and I saw that his other customers were purchasing cigarettes one,

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two, or three at a time. I watched while a man opened a handsome case with a baronial crest, placed in it the two cigarettes he had bought, and walked away. . . . Beggars whose sunken cheeks attested their hunger swarmed about the city — though one fat, well-fed scoundrel, smoking cigarettes through an amber holder, was to be found daily on the Salztor-Brücke, whining for alms. Going to and from the garage, I passed him three or four times a day — and never saw him without his cigarette — in its holder.

As always in times of depression, politics were unsettled. By taxing liquors the Socialist city government had raised enough money to build model tenements — and had found few working-men who earned enough to be able to live in them.

At irregular intervals the Nazis burst into the most fashionable restaurants and indiscriminately assaulted the guests. The guests, they reasoned, had money; and to the simple-minded Hitler-men it followed that all such persons were Jews.

Just once I attempted to walk the length of the Kärntnerstrasse after dark. I gave it up and beat a hasty retreat to my car. It is one thing to be approached by an out-and-out prostitute; but it is heart-rending to be solicited by a woman who obviously is — or until recently was — a member of decent society.

I asked a pretty girl why she was unmarried. She replied with disconcerting frankness: "In Austria young men can't afford to get married any more. They don't make enough — so we girls all have lovers." I ex-

LA VILLE QUI MEURT

pressed my incredulity. She said: "I have many friends. Not a single one of them has got married during the last three years. And babies aren't being born any longer; we can't support them."

Here, at last, was a statement which could be checked up. I investigated, and found schools closing for want of pupils . . . and the streets of the city were singularly bare of children.

With Herr M—, my translator, I visited a "*heurige Stube*" — an inexpensive wine-café in which only wines of the year's vintage are drunk. I heard a gathering almost in tears sing the old Viennese songs that everybody knew by heart. Herr M— whispered: "A hundred of these men, taken at random, couldn't raise a hundred thousand schillings between them. They are spending their last groschen on jollity; *après lui, le déluge!*"

They sang:

*Fein, fein schmeckt uns der Wein,
Wenn man zwanzig ist
Und auch die Liebe!
Fein, fein schmeckt uns der Wein,
Wenn man dreissig ist
Und auch die Liebe!
Wenn man vierzig ist
Man noch gerne küsst,
B'sonders wenn man einst sparsam gewesen ist,
Doch wen man älter wird,
Ein wenig kälter wird,
Bleibt allein
Nur der Wein!*

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

Fine, fine is the taste of wine,

When one is twenty

And so, too, is love!

Fine, fine is the taste of wine,

When one is thirty

And so, too, is love!

When one is forty

One still likes a kiss,

Though it's a pleasure one doesn't much miss,

Then one grows older,

And somewhat colder —

What is fine?

Only wine!

Dying to the throb of Viennese music! Dying, but singing as they die! Dying with the taste of wine — and kisses — on their lips! No modern Austrian army ever won a battle, but Austrians know how to die in the best light-opera manner.

Were they Gallic, they would be likened to those cadets of Gascony for whom Cyrano declaimed verses while musketry fire mowed them down. Were they English, there might be a Tennyson — or even a Hood — to sing their tragedy. But they are Germanic, and they must turn to a Frenchman, Henri Murger, to find their epitaph: "There are no cemeteries for birds."

The Bund

Of the many clubs I visited, it was one of the most poverty-stricken; and of the many club members I met, they were among the most congenial.

THE BUND

The German language contains an untranslatable word: "*gemüthlich*." "Sympathetic" approximates it, but is not strong enough. "Friendly," "agreeable," "likable," all convey shades of its meaning. But the best way to define the word is to state that it epitomizes the quality in the Viennese that makes the rest of the world regard them with a strangely personal affection, and let it go at that. When I say, therefore, that I found the members of the *Bund gemüthlich*, I have said enough.

Vienna offers a multitude of distractions. It was not until several days after my arrival that it occurred to me to seek the *Bund für Freilichtkultur*.

I located it without difficulty. The address is that of an office building in the heart of the city.

"Top floor," said the janitor, and indicated the automatic elevator.

I entered it. I closed the doors. I pressed the top-floor button. And nothing happened.

I examined the elevator more closely. While more temperamental than others, Austrian elevators do occasionally work, and I knew the janitor would not have waved me to it had it not been in good humour. A sign, at that time new to me, stared me in the face: "Deposit ten groschen."

Ten groschen are a cent and a half. I dropped the required coin in a slot, pressed the button again, and the elevator started with a monstrous jerk. It gave convulsive heaves and shudders as it passed each of the various floors. It gave a final shudder and stopped

abruptly as it reached the landing I wanted. I emerged and investigated.

A door confronted me. On it was painted the name of a business firm. That, obviously, was not what I sought.

At the head of a short flight of stairs to the left another door was visible. It bore no legend of any kind. It seemed the logical place. I rang the bell and waited. I rang again and waited. I knocked. There was no reply. I rang again. I tried the knob.

The door was unlocked and I walked into a deserted club. A short entrance hall led me to what was clearly a central room. Facing me were two garderobes — dressing-rooms, lightly curtained. At my left were lockers — most of them open — containing clothes. Farther to the left was the secretary's office. At my right were two rooms: a reading-room well supplied with magazines, and a large adjoining room containing emptiness and a ping-pong table.

At my side a steep flight of stairs appeared to lead to the roof. "Hello!" I shouted. "Hello!"

No answer came to my hail.

A bulletin board faced me. I read circular letters urging members to pay their dues, ten schillings (a dollar and forty cents) a month; to patronize the club's *Gelände* on the Danube more frequently; to bring their children on Sundays.

The mention of a date caused me to examine my memorandum book. It was Saturday afternoon, and

THE BUND

the empty club was explained. The members were out of the city.

I left my card on the secretary's desk and departed. It was a few days later when I returned.

A young woman pushed open the door just ahead of me.

"I am an American, and a member of French nudist clubs," I explained. "May I see the secretary?"

Her eyes opened wide, but she indicated the way to the office. I crossed the central room, strewn with clothing, but empty of members, and I rapped at the door.

It was opened immediately.

"*Der Herr Sekretär?*"

A fully dressed blond man in the early thirties, typically Austrian in build and physiognomy, bowed coldly. "I am the secretary."

I presented myself. "I left my card here."

"Yes," he said. "Didn't we write you, through Herr M—, that our club is open only to members of other similar clubs?"

I produced my credentials.

He glanced through them, compared the identification photographs they bore with my face, and his whole manner changed abruptly. "The Sparta Club? The Club de Loumède? *Ach*, why didn't Herr M— mention that you were already one of us? Herr Strange, you are very welcome here. How long do you expect to stay in Vienna?"

“That’s hard to answer. I’ve been here some time already. I may remain a week longer. I may remain ten days.”

“Good,” he said heartily. “Saturday and Sunday we go to our *Gelände* at Greifenstein. We shall be delighted to have you with us. Friday evenings we go swimming at a pool in the city. You would enjoy that, and we invite you to join us. During the week our members come here — ”

“Here?” I said.

“We have a small roof, and one can be in the sun. Would you like to visit the roof now?”

I hesitated. In my mind nudism was associated with the thought of open country, field and forest, lake and stream and sea, and the idea of nakedness on a roof in the centre of a large city was bizarre. Moreover the memory of the ping-pong table was with me. I wondered if ping-pong was played in a state of complete undress.

“Some of our members are on the roof now. Undress here, Herr Strange, and go right up. You are our guest.”

I debated again, and could not go through with it. “Some other time, *Herr Sekretär*,” I said. “This afternoon I have an important appointment. I merely stopped in to meet you and to inquire if it would be agreeable to have me visit your *Gelände* — ”

“But of course, Herr Strange. Shall it be the coming week-end?”

“Perhaps — perhaps — if I can find the time.” The

ON THE ROOF

situation was rapidly becoming impossible. I put an end to it decisively. I shook the secretary's hand. I thanked him in my best German. I sought the elevator.

Naturally the infernal thing carried passengers only on the up trips. I clumped down six flights of stairs. The street was hot, and my clothes were uncomfortable. I surveyed the building from which I had emerged.

I decided I was an idiot.

On the Roof

Another afternoon — and a sizzling one. The heated air rose in visible layers from the blistering streets. July had come, and there was no doubt of it.

The majority of the Viennese museums close for the day at one o'clock. That is unfortunate, for they are delightfully cool on the hot days of summer, and I would gladly have lingered until evening in any one of them. I had visited St. Stephan's Church — open afternoons — and the Palace of Schönbrunn — open afternoons — and the Capuchin Monastery, where some scores of Habsburgs are buried — at home five to six p.m. I had visited the splendid open-air swimming-pools at Mödling, and at Vöslau, and at Baden. I considered revisiting one of them, and reflected that they would be insufferably crowded on such a day. Moreover it would be a lonely visit. While European customs permit solitary males to address whom they please without offence, and while attractive young women thus

approached are likely to reply affably, such haphazard acquaintanceships are not invariably pleasant. It is easy to meet somebody. It is sometimes desirable to return to the status of stranger, and it may be difficult to do so.

The long hours of the afternoon lay before me, and I dripped perspiration. My bathtub was one obvious solution. I debated the wisdom of spending the entire afternoon in it, but foresaw that I should be lonely. It is possible, I suppose, to address discourse to a piece of floating soap, and some of my friends are noted for the mellifluous strains which issue from their lips while they tub themselves; but such devices are mere stop-gaps. A piece of soap does not answer back; and an American attempting vocalism in a Viennese hotel would attract altogether too much attention.

Thus reflecting, I turned into the Kohlmarkt and recognized a familiar building. I had never tried nudism on a roof. It did sound *outré*. But hot weather is a great resolver of hesitations.

I entered the building. I sought the elevator.

"*Der Lift* goes not today," said the janitor. (I discovered subsequently that the elevator invariably worked on Saturdays and Sundays, when there was little demand for its services, and perversely went out of commission week-days, when it was much needed.)

"Come with me."

A service elevator took me to the fifth storey. The janitor unlocked two formidable locks and led me through an empty showroom. A flight of stairs took me

ON THE ROOF

that much nearer my destination. The janitor unlocked still more locks and indicated the final short flight. "There you are," he said, and when I tipped him twenty groschen, removed his hat in a magnificent bow.

I rang the bell.

"So you've come back?" said the secretary. "What a terribly hot day it is!"

"May I go up to the roof?" I asked humbly.

"Of course, Herr Strange. Here is the dressing-room."

I divested myself of my clammy garments. A member entered, dripping water and shivering. He spoke to me hospitably.

The secretary thrust his head in at the entrance of the garderobe. "Would you like a shower, Herr Strange, before you go to the roof?"

Would I? In less than ten seconds I was under a spout, and icy water was splashing over my body.

A young woman bathing in the other shower called out to me cheerfully, "That feels good on a day like this, *nicht wahr?*"

I shivered my joyful agreement. She was nude, and so was I. She offered to lend me her soap. I accepted the offer with thanks.

The friendly secretary came to the door. "Don't bother to dry yourself off, Herr Strange. Go up to the roof just as you are."

He escorted me up a short flight of stairs. He led me through a tiny attic room.

"Watch your head as you go through the window!"

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

Meine Damen — und Herren: Herr Strange — ein Amerikaner."

I emerged into the blazing sunlight — but I was naked, and it was no longer unpleasant. A breeze blew on my skin, and it was delicious. I stepped onto a small roof — I paced it off subsequently and estimated its dimensions at ten by twenty-five feet — but wooden boards covered it, and they were cool because they had been recently water-soaked.

A parapet four feet high enclosed three sides of the roof; a gable of the office building made a fourth wall. The sun shone down from overhead, and the heat was intense; but my well-tanned body was proof against the rays, and my sudden comfort, now that I was nude, was so great that it was almost incredible.

I shook hands with the assembled members — perhaps a dozen of them.

"Sie sind wirklich ein Amerikaner?"

The question was superfluous as soon as I opened my mouth and spoke with an American accent, but, as with the French, their interest in the nudist from the far-away land was prodigious.

My interest in them, however, was equal to theirs in me, and I surveyed the little assemblage that crowded the roof. Women were in the majority: on business afternoons most of the men were hard at work. There was a girl who could not have been over seventeen; there were several in the twenties; there was one of maturer years. A grey-haired man with a fine, intellectual face had risen to welcome me. He returned to a

ON THE ROOF

corner full in the sunlight, and lay down on his back with a triangular wooden box — the nudist equivalent of a pillow — under his head. A younger man spoke to me, asking me the inevitable questions about the state of nudism in America. Another man cast a glance at the coat of tan which covered me from head to foot, and remarked that I was obviously no novice.

A girl came to the spot where I had installed myself. "*Möchten Sie die Giesskanne gebrauchen?*" she inquired courteously.

She offered me one of the two sprinkling-cans which were much in evidence on the roof. Exactly as a cook bastes a chicken which she is roasting, and with the same object, making sure that it cooks evenly, so the members were basting themselves — or each other — alternately baking and spraying, and when the heat became too great, making brief visits to the showers one flight below.

I thanked her, but explained that I had just left the shower and was not yet ready for another. She smiled, and poured the cold water over herself.

A young man fell into conversation with me. He did not discuss the stock-market. He did not discuss the inter-allied debts. "What do you think of our Austrian literature?" he demanded.

I was well acquainted with the writings of Austrian authors and expressed my opinions guardedly. But there was no reason to be guarded about the illustrious dead. "Your greatest man," I said, "is undoubtedly Schnitzler. Everything he did, he did superbly. His

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novels are brilliant. Of his plays half a dozen are likely to survive indefinitely."

"How about Wassermann?"

"A German author who happened to move to Austria."

"What about Felix Salten — Hermann Bahr — Franz Werfel?"

"They are among the living. They still have to do their best work."

"Hofmannsthal — Grillparzer?"

"As a dramatist, Hofmannsthal was an excellent poet. As a poet, he was a good dramatist. Grillparzer represented mid-Victorian classicism in Austria. He is *passé*. Schnitzler is worth a dozen of either."

The argument raged furiously for half an hour — and the two chief participants in it sat naked on a roof in the city of Vienna, while their naked auditors formed a ring around them and listened to every word.

My flesh grew hotter. I decided to follow the example so often set by the others. "If you'll excuse me, I'm going down to the showers for a minute. Then I'll be right back."

A young woman followed me downstairs.

"What is the matter with that chap on the roof?" I asked her. "What has he got against Schnitzler? I can't say a word in his favour without having him contradict me."

The young woman drew me cautiously into the shower-room before replying. Then she began to laugh immoderately. "He doesn't mean a word he says!"

THE CORRECT NUDIST

"No?"

"He contradicts you so that you'll continue in the same strain. When you praise Schnitzler, it is music to his ears. He happens to be Schnitzler's nephew."

The Correct Nudist

Perhaps the sky is nearer the earth in Europe than in America. In New York a six-storey building would attract absolutely no attention. In Vienna it was one storey higher than most of the other buildings; hence a skyscraper.

To the north the gable of their own attic room gave them protection, and to the east and west stretched a panorama of lower roofs; yet the members of the *Bund* had their complaint: directly south, and only one street away, a super-skyscraper, eight storeys tall, was slowly rising over Vienna.

In the beginning they had had complete privacy. Now they had been compelled to erect canvas screens to shield themselves from the workmen who climbed up and down the growing steel skeleton. The canvas flapped dolefully in the light breeze, cutting off the view and, more disastrous, cutting off a great part of the sunlight. At noon it was not so bad; but as the sun sank lower, conditions rapidly became worse, until at six o'clock only a small patch of direct light remained.

The club fulfilled a unique function: it enabled its members, for the most part hard-working men and women, to leave their offices in the heart of the city for

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a sun-bath with no loss of time; and now it was but a matter of weeks until the occupancy of the neighbouring building would make a move necessary.

“ Why don't you rent the roof of the new building? ” I asked.

“ We could never afford it,” said the secretary. “ We have a few more than a hundred members. Our income is a thousand schillings a month [\$140]. We don't want more members, or our roof will become too crowded.”

“ Then why not raise dues? ”

“ It's hard enough to collect them now. We are offered the perpetual use of the roof of another building for a flat payment of six thousand schillings; but that, too, is far beyond us.”

“ The depression? ”

He sighed. “ Austria has been suffering from a depression ever since 1918. Heaven knows when it will end — if ever.”

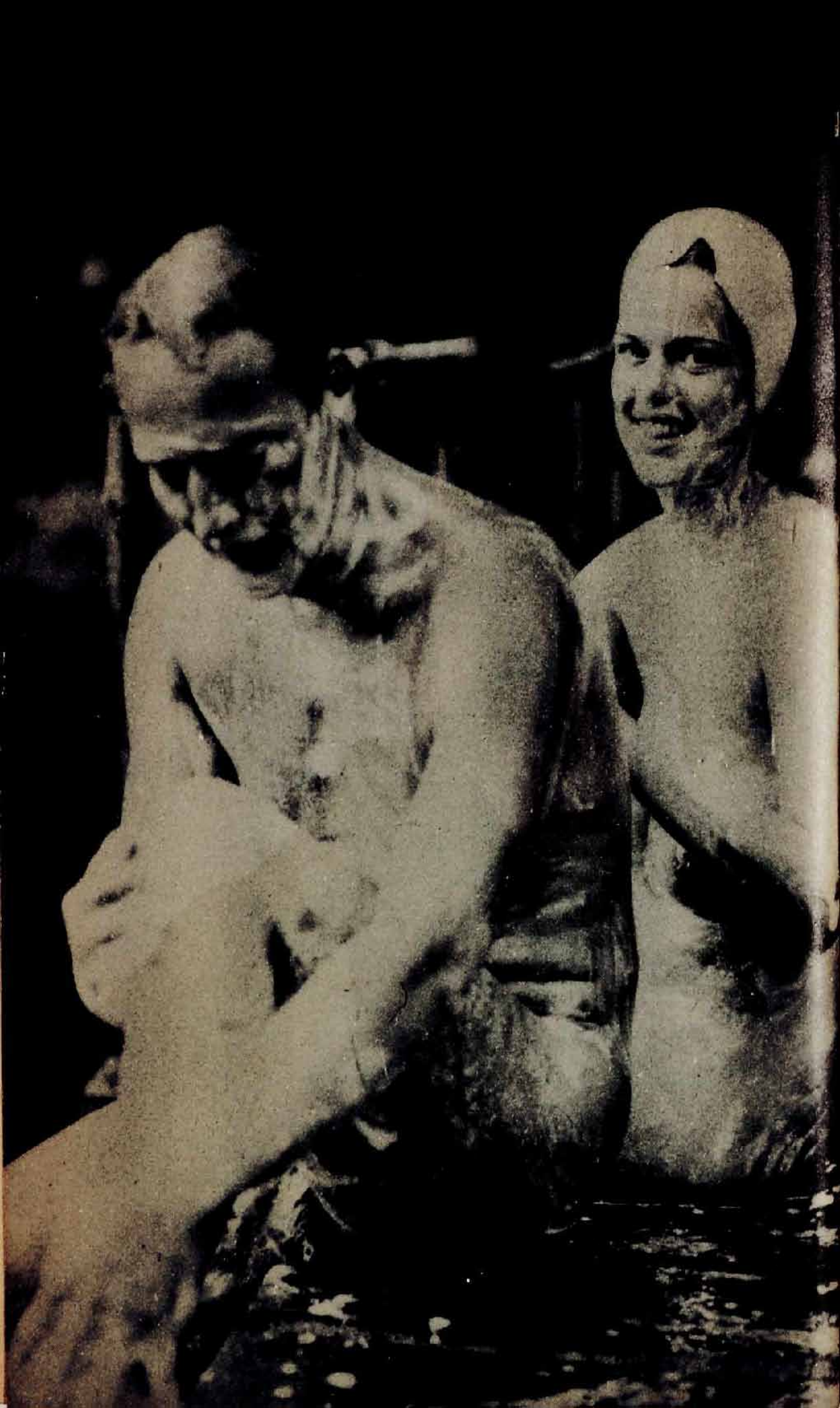
He was naked — and a pretty girl had stealthily crept to the opening of the attic window, which was behind us. Suddenly she spilled the contents of a can of cold water on the nape of his neck.

He was on his feet in an instant, dived through the window, and stormed through the club-rooms in pursuit of the girl.

The Viennese temperament is too resilient to be long cast down. . . .

I turned to the group on the roof. Dressed, there are few ways of passing time agreeably on a sweltering





THE CORRECT NUDIST

day; naked, there is an infinite variety. Exercise, clothed, is unthinkable in such weather; naked, it is decidedly pleasant. Even the most sedentary games lose their attractions when the participants are swathed in conventional garments and when rivers of perspiration trickle downward under sticky linen; naked — and with the showers a few seconds away — they are enjoyable.

In a corner two men and a young woman were trying to gather a bridge foursome. I played with them, but dropped out after a single rubber. Austrian playing-cards lack corner pips. It was my first experience with them, and I was glad to surrender my place to a newer arrival.

In an opposite corner a game of chess had just ended. "Would you like to play, Herr Strange?"

I accepted with alacrity and forgot the weather, my nakedness, the nakedness around me, in the delight of a well-fought game.

What did the nakedness matter? Nakedness is natural. Modesty is a quaint and outworn convention. I played a second game with the pretty girl, bare as the day she was born. We stared intently at the men on the board — and not at all at each other. The chess-board offered something new with each move; our bodies offered nothing that was not duplicated on the bodies of a million other human beings.

Yet other conventions were not discarded. A young woman trod on my foot. She apologized profusely. The Viennese correspondent of a great British newspaper

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dropped in. I was introduced to him with formality. He produced a packet of cigarettes and offered them to all the others before he lighted one himself.

Only one artificiality of modern civilization had been dropped; everything else remained exactly the same as before.

One of the members gazed over the parapet at a clock in a far-distant steeple. "Nearly seven o'clock," he announced.

I rose. I had had no idea it was so late. "I'm sorry, but I shall have to go."

The secretary came to my side. "Have you forgotten, Herr Strange?"

"Forgotten what?"

"It is Friday, and tonight we all go swimming."

Margaretenschwimmbad

"Are you hungry?" asked the secretary, as we emerged from the building in our street clothes. "If so, I advise you to control your appetite a little longer. It is not good to swim on a full stomach, and we begin promptly at seven thirty. We rent the pool for one hour and a half. Another club rents it from nine on. We make it a rule to be in and out exactly on time."

Several of the rear seats in my car were occupied by members, and as we turned into the Strobachgasse I could see a steady trickle of other members converging upon the building which housed the pool. As yet the evening was only a little less oppressive than the day,

and the attractions of swimming were irresistible. Some of the members were too busy to visit the roof; but few of them allowed anything to interfere with the Friday evening plunge.

We entered a waiting-room, one side of which was occupied by a cafeteria. At the far end the doors leading to the pool were still closed. It was a few minutes before the half-hour, and yet another nudist club had the use of the water.

I listened. I heard no shouts and no splashing. The doors opened momentarily to allow a young woman to leave, and I caught a glimpse of a deserted pool. The group which had just used it was as scrupulously punctual as we. Every member was out of the water, dressing, so that we might have undisputed occupancy on the stroke of the half-hour.

“*Halb acht!*” said the secretary.

The doors were flung open. Fifty or more persons streamed out at one side; fifty or more streamed in at the other.

Signs indicated which dressing-rooms were reserved for women and which for men. They were respected — I hardly know why — though few persons of either sex troubled to shut their doors while undressing.

For a second time I hurried out of my clothes. I came gingerly down the stairs. The air was too moist and too warm. The ventilation might have been better.

Men and women were crowding under the showers.

“The president of our *Bund*,” said one of the members, and introduced me.

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We shook hands through the spray.

"My daughter," said the president, and I shook hands with a shapely girl of eighteen or nineteen whose only garment was a rubber bathing-cap.

The pool was rectangular, perhaps thirty by seventy feet. A naked man — the swimming-instructor — took his stand at the centre of one of the short ends. "*Vier Damen!*" he bellowed in a voice that echoed through the building, "*vier Damen!*"

Four women took their places and prepared to dive. He explained to them that they were to race two lengths at the breast-stroke.

"*Eins! Zwei! Drei!*"

They were off, and he was already bellowing: "*Vier Herren! Jetzt vier Herren!*"

After a series of breast-stroke races came two lengths at side-stroke, and then two lengths free style, until those who wished to had raced several times. Like the air, the water of the pool was too warm; but I am fond of swimming, and I splashed about with enjoyment.

Half an hour of varied racing, and the instructor retreated to the side to coach individual swimmers, while the others amused themselves as they pleased.

At the shallow end an eight-year-old girl floundered about doubtfully. I swam to her. "Like it?"

Her eyes shone. "*Ja! Ja!*"

From the side her parents, both naked, watched her adoringly.

Impromptu races taking place every minute or two

indicated that even after their work-out the members had an abundant reserve of energy. At the deep end a girl whose figure was a delight to behold practised diving. Two men near her indulged in acrobatic feats, which terminated when both fell into the water. A pretty girl with red hair, a member of the club which was to follow us, appeared from one of the dressing-rooms — naked — and took a seat at the edge of the pool to survey the swimmers.

“ *Halb neun!* ”

A rush for the showers, though the pool remained well filled. Many members to whom I had not been formally introduced spoke to me hospitably.

Time for a final dip and one more shower.

“ *Drei viertel neun!* ”

The pool was abandoned. Silence reigned. The dressing-rooms filled with men and women seeking their street clothes.

The red-haired girl, member of the club which was to follow, rose slowly and posed at the end of the pool with her arms over her head, exquisite in her nakedness. She dived smoothly and cleanly into the water.

“ *Neun Uhr!* ”

We poured out through the doors, and another group of nudists poured in.

“ Hungry? ”

“ Very. ”

“ We’re getting up a party. ”

First a dozen of us, occupying two cars, stopped at a shipyard on the Danube, where a cabin cruiser

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being built for one of the few affluent members was nearing completion. We boarded it and inspected its interior with interest. Doubtless it would become the headquarters of nudist expeditions down the Danube. Then we proceeded to an outdoor restaurant in the country, where we devoured baked fish and broiled chicken, and downed seidels of beer, while the two enormous waitresses who had served us sang ditties to the accompaniment of a curly-haired fiddler.

The proprietor came to shake hands with each of us as we left.

“*Grüss Gott!*”

“*Grüss Gott!*”

The waitresses and the violinist stood at the entrance performing a final serenade as we drove forth into the night.

The Banks of the Danube

Streets leading to the railroad stations were jammed. The banks of the Danube were black with crowds.

It was Sunday, and it seemed that the entire population of Vienna had simultaneously resolved to take a bath.

No other city that I know of possesses bathing-facilities equal to those of the Austrian capital; and no other people I have ever encountered makes such a fetish of cleanliness as do the Viennese.

Four of the members of the club came to my hotel to meet me. Two of them were men, and they staggered under the weight of a load of medicine-balls.

“To Greifenstein?”

“To Greifenstein.”

I drove slowly, for the roads were choked. The rails between us and the river clicked as long trains, consisting entirely of third-class coaches — and those packed to suffocation — made their way to the popular bathing-resorts. Thousands of men and women who could not afford the fare tramped in the same direction. The men wore soft shirts and shorts. Many of them carried knapsacks. Some of the women wore similar costumes. Children were among the throngs, but their proportion was visibly lower than one might have expected.

Here and there along the swiftly flowing river were bathing-establishments cheaper than those I had patronized. They were hosts to uncountable hordes.

Greifenstein is less than twelve miles from the city. We arrived and parked in the courtyard of a rural hostelry.

“And now?”

“The ferry.”

The Danube is neither blue nor beautiful. Its colour is a muddy grey-green, and its aspect, certainly at Greifenstein, is threatening. Its rate of flow at that point is in excess of six miles an hour — a speed so great that the little launch in which we embarked did not attempt to cross directly. Instead it headed upstream, put the tiller hard over, and, by using its engines just enough to neutralize the effect of the powerful current, was swiftly borne to the other side.

“Do you swim in the Danube?” I asked one of my companions.

“In its shallows only.”

“What happens if a weak swimmer is carried farther out?”

He shrugged his shoulders. “Many, many swimmers are drowned every week-end.”

After two thousand years and more of recorded history the river is still a lusty child. It will not be disciplined. It overflows its banks, throwing out innumerable streamlets which meander through flat- and marsh-land, presently to return to their mighty parent.

By means of foot-bridges we crossed small tributaries. We marched some hundreds of yards through shoulder-high grass and goldenrod. We turned abruptly to the right.

I saw naked forms.

“*Die Gelände!*”

A small clearing, screened by densely growing vegetation, was the sum total of the club's country home.

“Buildings?”

“There aren't any. We rent. We don't own the land.”

“Dressing-rooms?”

I was shown two bushes, rather taller than the others. “This bush is the men's dressing-room. The other one is the women's. Hang your clothes on any branches that happen to be vacant.”

I laughed. The members of the *Bund* had adjusted themselves to its poverty with Viennese good humour.

THE BANKS OF THE DANUBE

“Where do you swim?”

“In the Danube — but our *Gelände* end here” (he indicated a spot only a few yards away), “and from there on we must wear bathing-costumes. We don’t like that.”

“Excellent!” I said. “There’ll be fewer of you drowned in the Danube.”

It was chilly, and the medicine-balls began to pass from hand to hand.

I seated myself at one side, and a young woman joined me. She stretched herself out luxuriously in the grass. “Tell me, Herr Strange, do the women do this in America?”

I directed the conversation back to herself and achieved an informal poll of the members. Over sixty per cent of the men were university graduates, and nearly fifty per cent of the women. One third of the men followed professions, lawyers predominating. The women included the proprietress of a book-shop, several engaged in business on their own account, many secretaries and stenographers, and a small minority who were not self-supporting.

There were surprisingly few married couples. There were, however, several married men who had joined without the knowledge of their wives, and at least one woman who had joined without the knowledge of her husband. Unlike Swiss, French, and American clubs, the consent of the spouse of the applicant is not demanded in Germany and Austria. And Vienna makes no pretence of Puritanism.

Politically and religiously the club is unaffiliated. It is sufficiently liberal to admit a handful of Jews.

“And you” — I turned to the young woman next to me — “tell me about yourself.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Anything you are willing to tell.”

She smiled. “I’m a secretary — twenty-eight years old — an orphan — unmarried. Probably I’ll never get married. I work hard, I sleep well, and I visit the roof every business day.”

“I didn’t see you there.”

“I’m there from ten minutes past twelve until ten minutes of two.”

“One hour and forty minutes?”

“Yes.”

I understood. The Viennese are an easy-going race. Quick lunches, high-pressure business, the sacrifice of everything to speed, have made little headway amongst them. Instead every employee of every business house has two full hours of freedom at some time during the day, and most of the other women whom I had met on the roof had also tarried exactly one hour and forty minutes.

“Ten minutes to the roof — ten minutes back to the office — and I’m as brown as an Indian. Have you many Indians in New York, Herr Strange?”

“They used to stand in front of cigar-stores,” I said gravely.

“*Ach!* You’re making sport of me!” she com-

THE BANKS OF THE DANUBE

plained. She rolled over lazily. " I visit the *Bund* also in the evening."

" Why in the evening? "

" There is no bath in the house where I live. Every evening I go to the *Bund* and take a shower. Many of us do that."

I cannot explain why I asked the question, but it came unexpectedly to my lips. " Fräulein, are you happy? "

She shrugged her graceful shoulders. " Why not? After all, what *is* happiness? Enough to eat, and a place to sleep — and a little more: a few good friends. Yes, I am happy. *Now* I am happy. What will the future bring? I don't know and it doesn't matter. It cannot bring much for Austrian women. I am an Austrian woman — therefore I live today, and brown my skin, and say: '*Gott sei dank, the sun is shining!*' "

I visited the *Bund* daily for a week. I made them a small cash donation before I left, and they presented me with a membership card.

It is one of my valued possessions.

BERLIN



A Nudist Traveller

IT was mid July, and I had wandered in leisurely fashion through Austria, Czechoslovakia, and south-eastern Germany. I had lost myself in old Prague and had drunk beer at the Hofbräuhaus in Munich and had spent a happy day in the Zwinger Galerie in Dresden. I had visited the unparalleled Deutsches Museum, and both Pinakotheks, and various and sundry palaces. I had jolted over the poor roads of northern Austria, and over the worse ones of Bohemia, and over both the fine ones and the abominable ones of Bavaria and Prussia. Near Jüterbog I had broken a front spring — and had marvelled as a blacksmith and two mechanics removed it, manufactured new leaves on the spot, re-installed it, and after more than two hours of hard work presented me with a bill for the equivalent of three dollars. On foot and late at night I had wandered through the crookedest streets of old cities, and had not been threatened — except by the inevitable street-walkers, who persisted when I said “*Nein*,” which is good German, and gave me up as hopeless when I

A NUDIST TRAVELLER

learned to say "Nē," which is dialect. And between jumps I had visited many nudist clubs. They offered relaxation, and they offered opportunities for the exercise so necessary to a traveller. More than that, they offered companionship.

The average American circulates through Europe visiting hotels, art galleries, theatres, and cabarets, and, except for guides, hotel clerks, waiters, and salesmen, he has no contact whatever with the inhabitants. He buys opera-glasses, imitation pearls, perfumes, carved pipes, and picture postcards. He is lost without the *New York Herald* or the *Chicago Tribune* (Paris editions). He tries to follow too many of Baedeker's suggestions, and fails. He is glad, at the end, to take ship for the one country where he is not a stranger, and ever after he tries to convince his friends — and himself — that his trip abroad was a constant delight.

My objects were diametrically opposed, and the nudist clubs made it possible for me to realize them. I had no acquaintances whatever in most of the cities which I visited, but I had merely to present my credentials to become a temporary member of a large group of persons whose unorthodox views guaranteed that there would be a satisfactory proportion of intellectuals. Physicians, lawyers, ministers, teachers, editors, authors, publicists, university students, and university professors: I met dozens of them at the clubs which extended their hospitality to me — and I could have met them in no other manner. A few rich men and hundreds who were not, a few women who were sup-

ported by husbands or fathers, and many times that number who were strictly on their own helped to make up a cross-section of liberal European life which could not have been duplicated for the conventional tourist. The fact that I subscribed to nudism, as my acquaintances did, broke down barriers. Their interest in me, as an American, was intense. My interest in them, as representatives of the more progressive elements in their own countries, was greater. It was my privilege to profit by an extended experience which, so far as I know, was unique.

Nor were my intimate contacts with the folk whose society I enjoyed particularly costly. At nudist clubs I paid a quarter to a half of what hotels charged me, and, despite the less ample food, was better entertained. No nudist club ever charged me a garage fee, and no European hotel — excepting only the Carlton, in Amsterdam, whose garage is free to its patrons — ever failed to do so. At the hotels I was obliged to dress several times a day. At the clubs one costume was *de rigueur*, and it is the only costume which can be worn indefinitely without incurring a laundry bill.

For periods of weeks at a time I encountered no Americans, saw no American papers, and heard no syllable of English. But I had not gone to Europe to study *homo sapiens*, sub-species Yankee. Sooner or later I would return to my own people — whose virtues are sometimes more apparent at home than they are abroad. For the time being I had an unrivalled oppor-

tunity to study other nationalities at close range, and to the fullest extent I availed myself of it.

Märchenwiese

At the offices of the Reichsverband für Freikörperkultur e. V., in Berlin, it was suggested that I might enjoy a visit to Märchenwiese ("the Fabled Meadows").

"It is not far from Berlin. Show your credentials when you get there."

Among my Berlin acquaintances was Fräulein K—, whom I knew to be a nudist. I invited her to accompany me. She accepted with alacrity.

We drove south, retracing in part the route I had followed from Dresden. We passed through Mariendorf, Lichtenrade, and Glasow. North of Gross Machnow we turned sharply east to Mittenwalde and Gallun. Between the two, troops of German Uhlans and Russian cavalry were charging up and down, and some hundreds of cheerful villagers, with belongings packed on carts, were giving a fair imitation of the events which had led to the battles of the Masurian Lakes far away and seventeen years earlier. Those battles had brought sudden and permanent fame to a little-known officer named von Hindenburg.

Motion-picture cameras clicked, a director and his assistants bellowed, police kept back the delighted spectators, and the American travelling in an American

car, and fitting so badly into the picture, was waved on his way in no uncertain fashion.

At Gallun we turned south, and a few minutes later the tall pines outlining the shores of the Motzener See rose before us.

The Motzener See, cigar-shaped, runs north and south. It is two and a half miles long and half a mile across at its greatest width. It is the principal centre of nudist clubs in the vicinity of Berlin, no less than five owning properties directly on its shores, while two others centre their activities on smaller bodies of water in its immediate neighbourhood.

Märchenwiese, beginning at the northern tip, runs along the eastern bank for more than a thousand yards. Directly opposite on the north-west shore are Birkenheide and Neusonland, smaller centres. The village of Kallinchen is central on the western bank. Adjoining it on the south, side by side on the water-front, are *Gelände* operated by the Reichsverband für Freikörperkultur and the Freie Menschen. At the southern tip of the lake is the railroad station of Motzenmühle. A hundred yards away is Freisonland, founded in 1911, and the oldest of the Motzener See centres. Cut off from the eastern bank of the lake by the railroad is the tiny Tonsee, surrounded by the Tonsee-Kreuzberg *Gelände*, one of the Adolf Koch organizations.

Märchenwiese, "Fabled Meadows," lives up to its name. It is one of the most attractive centres that I have seen. The extensive grounds are shielded from the road by a splendid forest of yellow pines growing

MÄRCHENWIESE

in sandy soil. Further privacy is assured by a strong fence, protected by signs — which are respected in Germany — and by a guard-house at the only gate.

We were admitted, and drove some hundreds of yards along a track well marked in the forest. I halted at a shady spot where a dozen other cars were already parked.

A man attired only in a black rubber bathing-cap came to my door. "Are you members?" he inquired.

I presented my papers.

"Good," he said, "we shall be glad to extend our courtesies." He carried a pad of guest-tickets and tore two off. I paid the nominal fee charged for them.

I quote some of the rules printed on the reverse of the tickets:

"SMOKING AND THE USE OF
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE FORBIDDEN.

THE USE OF BATHING-SUITS IS NOT PERMITTED.

THROWING AWAY OF PAPER AND RUBBISH
PROHIBITED.

FIRES MUST NOT BE LIGHTED.

HUNTING, FISHING, AND DAMAGING
TREES OR SHRUBBERY ARE NOT ALLOWED.

BATHERS ENTER THE LAKE AT THEIR OWN RISK.

ANY PERSON WHOSE BEHAVIOUR CAUSES ANNOYANCE
WILL BE SUBJECTED TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION."

They were characteristically German, and I admired the ingenuity with which "*verboten*" had been followed by four different synonyms.

"Undress in your own car, Herr Strange. You too, Fräulein. Then come with me."

He led us through a considerable forest dotted with tents. "Tenting room may be rented cheaply; and then you may live here as long as you wish. Some of our members live here all summer."

Fräulein K— peered into an empty tent. "Perhaps some time my sister and I will do that."

The forest ended, and we crossed a wide belt of sand unprotected against the hot sun. I was barefoot, and painfully aware of it — but tents were pitched on both sides of the belt, and the naked forms of persons whose soles were presumably tougher than mine were visible in and amongst them. My guest ran lightly across the belt.

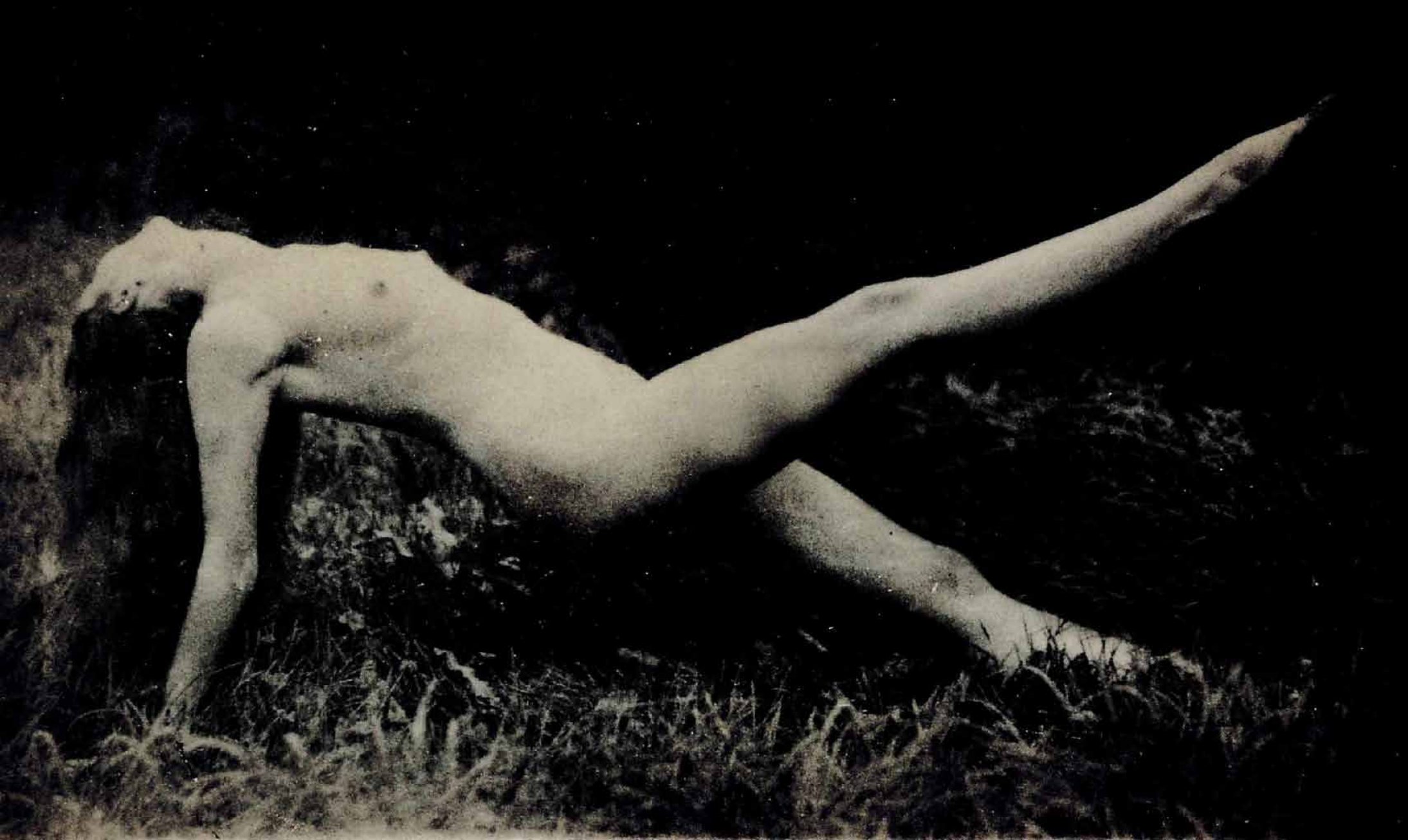
Parallel with the lake stretched a thicket of white birch, witch-hazel, and smaller shrubs. We picked our way through to emerge on a grassy green, smoothly clipped, occupying an area of not less than one hundred feet by a half-mile, bordering on the Motzener See itself, and terminated at the water's edge by dense clumps of tall reeds.

"Well, what do you think of Märchenwiese?" asked the secretary.

"*Herrlich!*" said Fräulein K—.

"A lake, a big lawn, a forest: you have everything," I said.





MÄRCHENWIESE

He led us to the water's edge. "Here is one of our bathing-places."

I peered through the clear water and saw that for yards around the mud bottom had been covered with sand. A pier extended into the lake far enough to make diving possible. Children and adults were splashing about; and I glanced across to the other shore to see the flash of naked skins there, too.

The secretary caught the direction of my glance. "Two more nudist clubs. The lake is almost surrounded by *Gelände*."

We walked over the well-mowed lawn, the grass delightful under our feet. Here and there were naked groups, but the grounds were so spacious that though there must have been considerable numbers present, there was no crowding whatever.

At the edges of the green, men and women lay stretched at full length, luxuriating in the sun. Hardier individuals had ventured to the sandy belt, had scraped away the unbearably hot top layer, and had lain down in shallow recesses to bake even more hotly. Except for the lawn itself, tents were everywhere: in the forest; on the sand; at the edge of the thicket. Children romped, and men and women worked in miniature flower-gardens — or exercised — or set out to navigate the lake in canvas-covered sailing-canoes, and except for the few who protected themselves against the heat with head-covering or with sandals, not a soul wore a stitch of clothing. Thus Puvis de Chavannes had painted the Elysian Fields, and thus, before the com-

paratively recent era of inhibitions, our ancestors had lived.

“If you are hungry,” said the secretary, “go to the canteen. You saw it in the forest. If you are thirsty, go to the same place. They sell all kinds of soft drinks.”

I chuckled. “How shall I pay for them?” I indicated my condition. “Must I go all the way back to my car for money?”

“By no means.” The secretary surveyed me. “You’re wearing a gold seal-ring. Leave it at the canteen and redeem it whenever you are ready to go. The women leave their bracelets. The men leave rings and wrist-watches. Everybody does that.” He shook hands with us cordially. “If you want to swim, there is the lake. When you want to dry, pick your spot. If you feel energetic, join in one of the games. Talk to anybody you please. You won’t be rebuffed.” He waved a cheery farewell, and we strode forth, naked, on a tour of investigation.

“*Bathing-Suits* Verboten!”

“And now what shall we do?” asked Fräulein K—.

“What would you like to do?”

She breathed deeply. She flung back her arms in a happy gesture. “I should love to swim across the lake.”

I looked at her. She was small. She lacked the stockiness of her Teutonic race. Her body was lean, but her arms and legs did not appear to be particularly well muscled. “Are you joking?”

“BATHING-SUITS VERBOTEN!”

“Oh, no!”

“It’s a full kilometer.”

“I have swum that far often.” She ran to the pier and poised herself. “Are you coming?”

I had gone to Märchenwiese for the purpose of seeing Märchenwiese and did not care about visiting the other camps. But visitors entered the lake, the ticket had mentioned, entirely at their own risk. I could not allow her to swim alone. “I’ll swim as far as the centre of the lake with you. By that time you will be glad to swim back.”

A young man had overheard our conversation. “May I come, too?”

“Certainly,” I said.

The water was velvety warm as we dived into it. The tall reeds we left behind nodded. The sun shone.

Fräulein K— swam slowly, but powerfully. Despite her apparent lack of fat she floated well. The young man easily kept pace with her.

We swam to the centre and a little beyond the centre. “And now back?” I suggested.

“Certainly not.”

“Aren’t you tired?”

“Not even a little.”

“If you want to swim back, sir,” said the young man, “I’ll go across with the Fräulein.”

It was so perfectly evident that they would be able to do it that I agreed. I trod water, watching them for some minutes. Their arms flashed rhythmically in the air. They reached the shallows on the other side. I

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

turned lazily on my back and paddled to the point from which I had started. I wondered how many American girls would have undertaken a swim of more than a half-mile as casually as had my German friend. . . .

I climbed out of the water and sat on the pier. Two girls, twelve and fourteen, with yellow pigtails hanging down their backs, came laughing to my side and leaped far out, making great splashes. Their bodies were burned almost black. Their faces were so tanned that they had achieved a dull, muddy colour. The shoulders and the back of the older child were beginning to show splotches of lighter hue, as is frequently the case with excessive sunburn. The extremely dark bodies and the very blond hair contrasted strikingly.

A tall, flat-breasted girl, possibly thirty years old, and of a decided Norwegian type, had walked out on the pier, and stood next to me.

"The children swim well," I said.

"They are not *my* children," she hastened to point out. "I am their governess."

One of the little ones had swum out too far. "Gretchen!" she called; "come back!"

The child did not obey. The governess poised herself, dived, and reached it in something under five seconds . . . and I began to understand why so many German families advertise for governesses who are nudists.

I slipped into the water and swam on to the next pier

A man, possibly thirty-five years of age, was thrashing about awkwardly. His face was intelligent.

“BATHING-SUITS VERBOTEN!”

He spoke to me pleasantly.

I replied.

“ Ah, a Viennese? ” he said.

The Viennese accent is to the “ High ” German as North Carolinian is to Bostonian. The Viennese speaks more slowly, softens the harsh consonants, and lengthens the vowels. It is a contagious accent, and if I had been able to confine my conversation to a few words only, I might have passed for an Austrian. But my much stronger American accent becomes evident if I say more, and in speaking the most grammar-bound of all languages I fall into errors.

“ I am not a Viennese. I am an American.”

“ *Jawohl?* ” He brought out one of his few English phrases. “ “ Pleased to meet you! ” ” Then he returned to his native tongue. “ I met the Americans some years ago — at Belleau Wood.”

“ You are lucky to be able to tell the story.”

He nodded, and hoisted himself painfully out of the water. He stood up. “ See! What they did to me.”

I looked.

Four deep indentations, regularly spaced one above another, marked his right leg from a point just below the groin to the ankle. He indicated his foot, which lacked a toe. “ The fifth bullet.”

I was sympathetic.

“ If the gun had been correctly traversed,” he pointed out with soldierly interest, “ I would have been wounded higher up — and not so often. I myself was a machine-gunner, and I know. You, too, were in the

War?" I nodded. "I was captured by the Americans," he went on.

"Were you well taken care of?"

"Excellently! Excellently! It was my misfortune that I escaped. My own people did not care for me as well as did the Yankees."

"You are young to have served in the War."

"I was in the University when I was called. After it was over I went back and graduated. . . . I come often to Märchenwiese. The sun is good for me. My leg is growing stronger. . . ."

An older man, sitting on the bank, turned to me abruptly. "Will America go off the gold standard? This book which I have been reading says it must." He showed me a volume hot from the press, and quoted from it with German respect for authority. "'Long before the winter of 1932-3 the United States will have followed the example of England.' Now, what do you think of that?"

"I am not an economist," I said, "and I never listen to prophets. We have too many of them in my own country."

I wandered away — over the sand belt — into the forest. I was thirsty, but could not locate the canteen.

A steamer-chair at the side of a tent attracted my attention. Stretched out in the chair was an elderly man with one of the finest heads I have ever seen. A magnificent forehead, commanding eyes, iron-grey moustache and beard made up an ensemble suitable for one of the old Germanic gods.

EPISODE

I walked nearer, and his level gaze met mine. "If you please, I have lost my way to the canteen."

He pointed silently.

"Thank you."

I turned, but not until I had seen his whole figure: the splendid chest; the great limbs; the huge belly.

That last object, I know, is supposed to be funny; but it did not seem funny to me then, and it does not seem funny now. I thought only how the man's dignity suffered when that huge belly was hidden under layers of cloth, and how much it contributed to his majesty, when, like a character out of the *Nibelungenlied*, he reclined in the sun and turned his compelling eyes upon mine. It was as if I had stepped back a hundred centuries into the days when the earth was young.

Episode

A delightful place — a modern Eden — "Fabled Meadows" where innocence and virtue reigned — and half an hour later occurred an episode which brought me back to earth with a crash.

I recount it because I am telling the truth and because it really happened. I have said much in favour of nudism. I do not close my eyes to incidents which cannot be interpreted to its credit.

Fräulein K— had rejoined me. She had found me in the sand, in the company of a stranger who had spoken to me, stretched out in the sun. "I'm tired," she said. "I swam across the lake — and back." She

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

proved she was tired by executing a handspring and coming to a stop at my side.

The stranger became interested. "You did that well, Fräulein; but can you do this?" He demonstrated a complicated handstand.

She imitated him perfectly, and with far more grace.

"And this?"

It was a difficult contortion, with the arched body poised finally on hands and feet and the spine bent in a reverse arc.

I was not greatly interested; but my glance happened to fall on the man who had demonstrated — and his expression was not of the kind that I like to see at a nudist club. I stared at him, but his attention was so completely riveted on the girl that he was not aware of my scrutiny.

"Can you do this?"

I did not like the way in which the watcher shifted his position — nor the direction of his glance. I was relieved when the gymnastics ended, and Fräulein K—announced her intention to go swimming once again.

Her energy was a marvel to me. I closed my eyes. I may have dozed five minutes — and then she came flying back to me, and I could see that she was agitated.

"What is the matter?"

"That man," she said briefly.

"What about him?"

"He followed me when I left here. He asked me if I didn't want to see his tent. I said no. Then he asked me if I didn't want to spend the night here — in his

A NUDIST FILM

tent. I didn't answer. I hurried toward the water. He followed along the path between the reeds, caught up with me, and seized me from behind — with his hands on my breasts. I broke away. I'll stay near you now."

I was indignant. "Why not turn around and walk back with me? I will reason with him — and I am an excellent boxer."

"No! No! There mustn't be any scandal!"

I urged.

She was adamant.

"If you won't let me speak to him, do let me say something to the secretary. I know he will take immediate action. Anyhow, it's our duty to report a thing of this kind."

"No! No!"

"I have visited many nudist clubs. I have never known anything like it to occur before —"

"You must not say a word! This is Germany, not the United States. Who will believe that I didn't lead him on?"

We said nothing — and left half an hour later. . . .

I have related the episode exactly as it occurred. Nudism is not perfect. Nudists are human — and such episodes occur ten times as often at beaches where bathing-suits are worn.

A Nudist Film

One afternoon I went to the "House, Air, Sun for All Exposition." Nudism in Germany is intimately as-

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

sociated with other reform movements: better housing; improved school and factory lighting and ventilation; modernized clothing; gymnastics; the care of the body; hiking, camping, and boating.

A huge building was filled with exhibits of everything having to do with healthful living. Model houses, reproduced on smaller scales with German fidelity to detail, occupied an acre of floor space. Simplified costumes for men and women, airier, lighter, more comfortable, less costly, filled many booths. Camping paraphernalia, including tents, cooking appliances, folding canoes (at whose manufacture the Germans are unexcelled), games, and even small, inexpensive automobiles were exhibited in great variety.

There was an enormous crowd, and in the auditorium of the building not fewer than five hundred persons attended each showing of a motion picture dealing with nudism.

I sat in the rear of the hall.

A lecturer attired in the street clothing recommended by the reform organizations, similar, except for its omission of head-covering and neck scarf, to the uniform made so well known by the Boy Scouts, held forth at some length on the allied subjects of rational clothing and rational unclothing. He was listened to with respect by the large audience.

Then came the film. It began with glimpses of Berlin slums, of unsanitary crowding, of children playing in gutters, in dark alleys, in places where even mongrel dogs could not thrive. It travelled to the great out-

A NUDIST FILM

doors, and it showed in detail what the *Nacktkultur* movement has accomplished for those same children — and their parents — and what it may accomplish for others.

A clad group on the screen; a flicker, and the same group rejoiced naked in the sunlight. The audience was most attentive, and I wondered in what spirit an audience of my countrymen would have witnessed the same picture.

The film told a story and argued little. When the movement can bring its devotees to places where swimming may be indulged in, it is at its best; but even when water is distant, sunlight and open meadows are never far away. Every vacant field and every empty city lot are potential nudist centres. All of their neighbours might benefit by their use.

The thought that bathing in light is not less necessary than bathing in water is radically new to great masses of the population; and its corollary, which becomes the basic principle of nudism, the thought that so-called "modesty" might well be abolished because of its inconvenience, its separation of families, its unsociability, and, most of all, its unhealthy conflict with the ideals of an uncompromising moral hygiene is possibly even newer.

Nakedness singly, and nakedness wholesale; ring-tennis; athletic games of many kinds; gymnastics; swimming; canoe-sailing; long hikes, naked, across fields and through forests; schools, at which naked teachers instructed naked pupils; meals, with the eaters

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

seated naked in the open; blazing camp-fires, and naked people gathered about them at night; nakedness far away and nakedness close up; nakedness of all ages, manners, and conditions; the film was encyclopædic, and it omitted nothing.

In summer, clothing is not required for any out-of-door activity. In winter, when the sun is hot, skiing is only one of the many sports which may be indulged in with no clothing other than socks and shoes. The beautiful and the ugly, the young and the old, the hale and the sick had their places in the long procession of scenes. The presentation was one of absolute frankness.

The film ended, and though I had observed the audience closely, there had not been a snicker, a titter, a laugh. I watched the crowd filing out. I overheard snatches of conversation. They were sympathetic.

A new audience filed in to witness the next showing.

Later I glanced through the copy of *Freikörperkultur und Lebensreform* which had been handed me at the entrance.

The Bund für Körperkultur und Naturschutz announced that on the 24th its team, consisting of men and women, would play that of the Deutsche Luftbad-Gesellschaft at "*Faustball*," one of the many varieties of games permitting the use of large teams. Such inter-club matches are frequent. The members of the Neusonland group announced an evening of song about the camp-fire, and told its members to bring their musical instruments. The "Sonnensportbund 'Nord'"

A NUDIST FILM

announced a lengthy trip — nude, when possible — for those of its members possessing canoes. A club in Duisburg asked its members to meet at the *Gelände* to do much needed manual labour on them. The Bund der Lichtfreunde of Essen announced joint meetings with other groups. The celebrated Orplid group of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, one of the most active in Germany, detailed its elaborate plans. The Lichtkreis of Cologne announced a series of lectures and forums. Members were urged to bring interested friends. Another organization in the same city announced a program covering a full week, including lectures, meetings, swimming evenings, and musical evenings. A group in Wiesbaden told its members to report on the following Sunday with their musical instruments. Clubs were active in Heidelberg, Bonn, and Göttingen, all three university towns. Dresden and Nürnberg and Munich associations broadcast their activities. Leipzig announced gymnastics, indoor and outdoor swimming, canoe trips, and a “*Revanchespiel*” (revenge game) of water-polo. “*Das Spiel verspricht sehr interessant zu werden,*” said the advertisement; “the game promises to be most interesting.”

Three solid pages of announcements, set in small type, terminated with details concerning a few foreign groups — and it is to be borne in mind that the publication, being that of the Reichsverband, dealt only with the doings of the clubs affiliated with that national organization. There are four such national associations, each embracing scores of local groups.

I left the building with much food for thought. Our late enemies are breeding a healthier, stronger, more vigorous race than is possible under the régime of Mrs. Grundy. They have solved the alcoholic question, not by Utopian legislation, but by inculcating the ideals of temperance and clean living. *Nacktkultur* meets the manifold problems of modern civilization with an honesty which we may well emulate and which we may one day imitate.

Uederland

“So you would like to visit a distinctly proletarian group?” said my friends at headquarters. “Go with Herr Krotki.”

Herr Krotki knew America, having visited us in the preceding winter. “I was captain of our bob-sledding team,” he told me. “We went to Lake Placid to compete in the Olympic championships.”

Herr Krotki had just bought a new motor-cycle, and was to call for it in an hour. He and his wife and a friend planned to spend the week-end at Uederland. “Would you like Frau Krotki to guide you there?”

“It will be most courteous of her.”

“It will be a great convenience to me,” said Herr Krotki. “The motor-cycle has a side-car, but the roads are bad, and three of us cannot go together.”

Frau Krotki, a portly woman in the thirties, guided me north from Berlin over roads which merited her husband’s denunciation of them. Surely badly cobbled roads should rank high among German atrocities!

UEDERLAND

Presently the cobbles ceased, and mud took their place. I ploughed through it, skirting great puddles, driving unwillingly through the centres of others, worried lest the car should lose its momentum and pause indefinitely in the middle of a deceptive pool. Some were an inch deep, but in some we sank more than a foot.

Thirty-five miles from the centre of Berlin: running-time, one and three-quarters hours.

"Uederland," said Frau Krotki.

The muddy road ended just beyond the crest of a hill. The valley beneath disclosed its panorama to my eyes. A large lake, bordered by tall trees on the opposite shore, but with a gently shelving beach of clean sand on the side nearer me; a large, level, sandy area, traversed by a rivulet, ideal for games or for sunning; the sand rising slowly to the right, and becoming more clayey; rising more steeply to spread out in a heavily wooded plateau thrust between the lake and a smaller pond: they made up a composite picture nothing short of ideal. Märchenwiese had lacked hills; Uederland possessed everything. I have visited a score of nudist clubs in many countries. I have yet to see one whose natural facilities equal those of the Uederland property.

The tree-clad slopes were dotted with more than a score of tents, each in its carefully restricted plot; farther to the right, and nearer the forest, were a few one-storey wooden bungalows; a large communal building was at my left.

I parked the car and noticed that while there were

many persons about, there was not another automobile to be seen.

"Shall we lunch first?" said Frau Krotki.

I paid my guest fee, and we entered the principal building. To my right was a large room used as a dining-hall; to my left were the offices, the stairs, and the dressing-room.

Tables were scattered in the dining-hall. About them were seated persons in the greatest variety of costumes I have ever seen. One third of the men wore complete clothing, or shirts and trousers, or trousers alone. One third of the women were dressed, though some of them wore nothing from the waist up. Two thirds of those present were completely naked.

Even to an observer so hardened as myself, the effect was bizarre. Neither nakedness nor the presence of wholly clad individuals among the naked is so startling as is an admixture of the partly clad. The gathering acquires a locker-room character which may be more inviting to others than it is to me.

We ate. I had brought sandwiches from Berlin and needed only to order coffee. I did so. It was passed out in chipped cups, and it was not palatable.

I washed down the sandwiches with the alleged coffee and longed for some other drink with which to wash away the taste of the coffee. I looked out. Women were rinsing dishes in the rivulet. Knives and forks were being scoured with sand. Lunch was over, and with true German neatness, the debris disappeared completely. Behind the house a fully dressed man

UEDERLAND

pumped water for a naked girl. Outside four men and women, one of them dressed, played ping-pong. And naked children were everywhere.

"My husband won't be here for at least an hour," said Frau Krotki. "Wouldn't you like to see the grounds? And wouldn't you like to undress before you walk over them?"

I said yes to both questions.

I sought the dressing-room. Hooks screwed into boards, run across horizontally, were filled with male and female clothing. I found two that were unoccupied. I hung my garments on them.

Frau Krotki was waiting for me fully clad.

"Why didn't you undress?" I asked.

"I am badly sunburned. Later, when the sun is lower, I shall undress, also."

We walked to the beach, my hostess in street clothing, I completely naked. She met an acquaintance. I waited while she left me for an instant.

A man of sixty, paunchy, well browned, looked me over with friendly interest. "*Guten Tag*," he said. "*Wie heisst du?*"

I was astonished beyond words. The German language, like other European languages, offers the choice of two second-person singulars. "*Sie*," equivalent to "you," is the polite form, invariably used for social and business intercourse. "*Du*," equivalent to "thou," is the intimate form, used only in addressing close relatives, intimate friends, menials — and the Deity.

For a stranger to address me as "*du*" was unprece-

dented. I controlled my surprise. "*Ich heisse Julian Strange.*"

He shook hands with me. "How dost thou do, Julian?" he asked, not only using the intimate form again, but addressing me by my Christian name. "My name is Fritz C—."

I rose to the occasion. "I am glad to know thee, Fritz," I said. His elderly wife joined us. "Thou art much sunburned, Minna," I remarked presently.

Frau Krotki nodded when I told her of what had occurred. "You must never say '*Sie*' here," she explained. "Only '*du*'; always '*du*.' You must never say '*Herr Schmidt*,' or '*Frau Schmidt*,' or '*Fräulein Schmidt*.' Call them by their Christian names — always."

"How do the children address the older persons?"

"By their Christian names, of course. Here we are all equals — all proletarians."

The Nudist Proletariat

We walked, the stout German woman in her clothes, the American guest attired merely in his tan, surely an oddly assorted pair.

We encountered a laughing couple in the wood, a young man and a young woman. They spoke to us pleasantly — using "*du*." We met persons who were clad, others who were unclad. They greeted us most affably.

The pines were planted with mathematical accuracy.

THE NUDIST PROLETARIAT

We strolled among them, looking out over the sparkling Uedersee thirty feet beneath us, speaking invariably to the men and women we met. We passed a bungalow. The mother was at work in the house. The father spaded the little garden. The children romped in an enclosure. All four were naked.

We returned to the beach. I fell into conversation with one of the members.

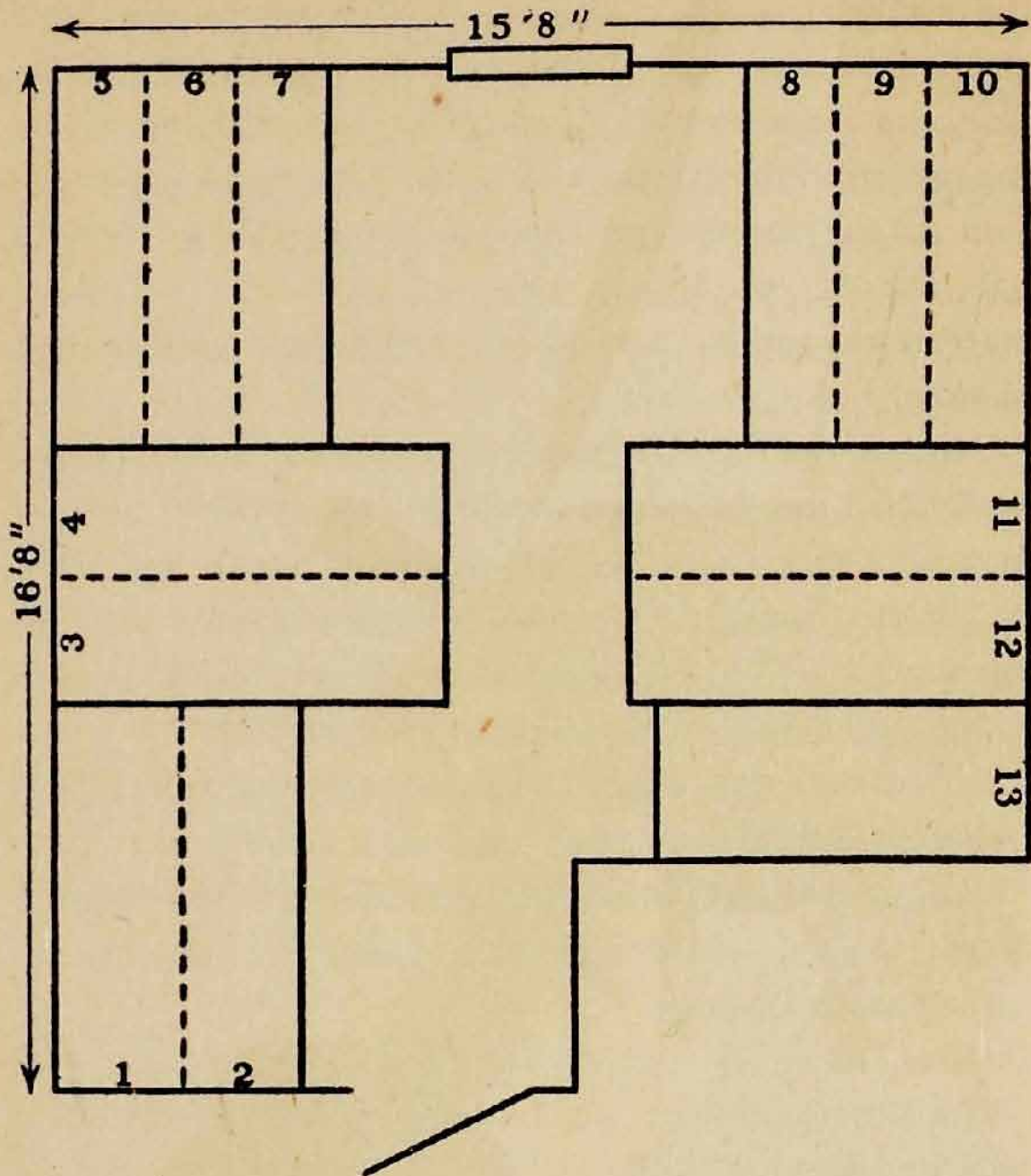
"In the beginning," he said, "there were two clubs: Freijugendland-Uedersee, and the Bund für freie Körperschulung. One club was Hitler-Socialistic; the other was communistic. The two are irreconcilable political quantities. Proletarianism, however, was strong in both clubs, and anti-Semitism was equally strong.

"Neither club was able to succeed separately. They consolidated. They agreed on what they could. They forgot the rest. And having agreed to be anti-Semitic, they get along excellently today under the management of a Jewish director."

The statement was worthy of *Alice in Wonderland*. Whether it is true or not, I do not know. I merely quote my informant.

I expressed a desire to visit the dormitories. Together with two small "private" rooms, each "accommodating" two persons, there are two dormitories, and they take up the second floor. One dormitory "accommodates" twenty-six men in quarters comparable only to a sardine-tin; the other provides for a like number of women. I made a sketch of the arrangement on the spot, and reproduce it herewith.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS



Each dormitory is *double-decked*. Mattresses, touching one another, as shown, are arranged on the floor. A crude framework holds a second tier of mattresses, similarly arranged, at a height of four feet. The height of the ceiling is eight feet at the centre, less at the sides, for there is a dormer roof.

Each dormitory contains two single, six two-thirds, and four double mattresses. Numbers are painted on

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the walls, at the heads of the mattresses. One person sleeps on each single mattress, *two on each two-thirds size, and three on each double*. Ventilation comes from the one window and the one door. The greatest dimension of the room is a few inches over sixteen feet. I paced it off, though it was not necessary; since the mattresses touch, a simple calculation supplies the answer.

No provision whatever is made for clothes. They are left in the dressing-room on the ground-floor. The members seek their fractional beds naked.

"Well, what do you think?" asked one of the members.

"I am an author, therefore a proletarian," I replied, "but I would not sleep in such a room."

"It is cheap."

"It is still cheaper to sleep in the open, under the trees."

"It rained heavily last night. What would you have done?"

"I should have been quite comfortable in a sleeping-bag, and I should have had fresh air."

"You might have caught pneumonia."

My proletarian inclinations vanished on the instant. "If I must choose between the two, I would rather catch pneumonia than sleep on one third of a mattress — and in one twenty-sixth of a room the size of this one."

One of my hosts commented half seriously, half humorously: "I don't think you're a true proletarian."

I agreed with him. "If *this* is proletarianism, I am against it."

But the lake was beautiful, and the water was stimulating, and the sun was hot.

When Herr Krotki arrived, four of us swam over to the other side: a distance of little more than a quarter of a mile. Later we returned, dried at the beach, and sought the thick grass of the hills bordering the smaller lake to bask in the sun.

We talked of many things, among them the amazing moderation of the charges. A married couple or a single member over thirty pays the equivalent of three dollars a year; a member between eighteen and thirty, two dollars a year; a member under eighteen, nothing. The initiation fee of *twenty-four cents* is waived for the last class. Profits on the sale of food and lodging are apparently sufficient to keep the enterprise afloat — and, as would be expected, it is patronized largely by jobless men and women in search of cheap living. Here they can exist until prosperity returns.

"Are you going to remain overnight?" asked Herr Krotki.

"There are no vacant tents."

"But there is a dormitory."

"I have seen it," I said, "and the sooner it is burned down, the better for Uederland. Your membership includes many artisans. Let them contribute their labour. Let the more affluent gather together a few hundred marks."

"And then?"

LUNAPARK WELLENBAD

“Some day the proletarians will make this place a paradise.”

I returned to the dressing-room to reclothe myself. Many more visitors had arrived, and it was seriously overcrowded. Two lusty girls, twenty-odd, blond, laughing, had just come in. They saw me begin to dress and rushed to my sides.

As I removed a garment from a hook, they filled the vacancy with one of theirs.

Lunapark Wellenbad

Twice a week the great Lunapark Wellenbad is reserved for the nudist clubs. I visited it on my last night in Berlin.

Nudism indoors — on the proper occasions, and in the proper company — is a natural sequel to nudism outdoors. The sun is lacking, there are no lawns on which to bask, and no fields and forests in which to wander; but converts to open-air nudism are reluctant to encumber themselves with clothing at times when it interferes seriously with enjoyment. Gymnastic exercises when one is clothed are decidedly less agreeable than the same exercises when nude. Many games, particularly those of the handball family, become more pleasurable as the amount of clothing worn decreases. And those individuals who have tasted the delight of swimming naked, of feeling the cool water on every inch of the body, know how poor a substitute is a dip in a bathing-suit.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

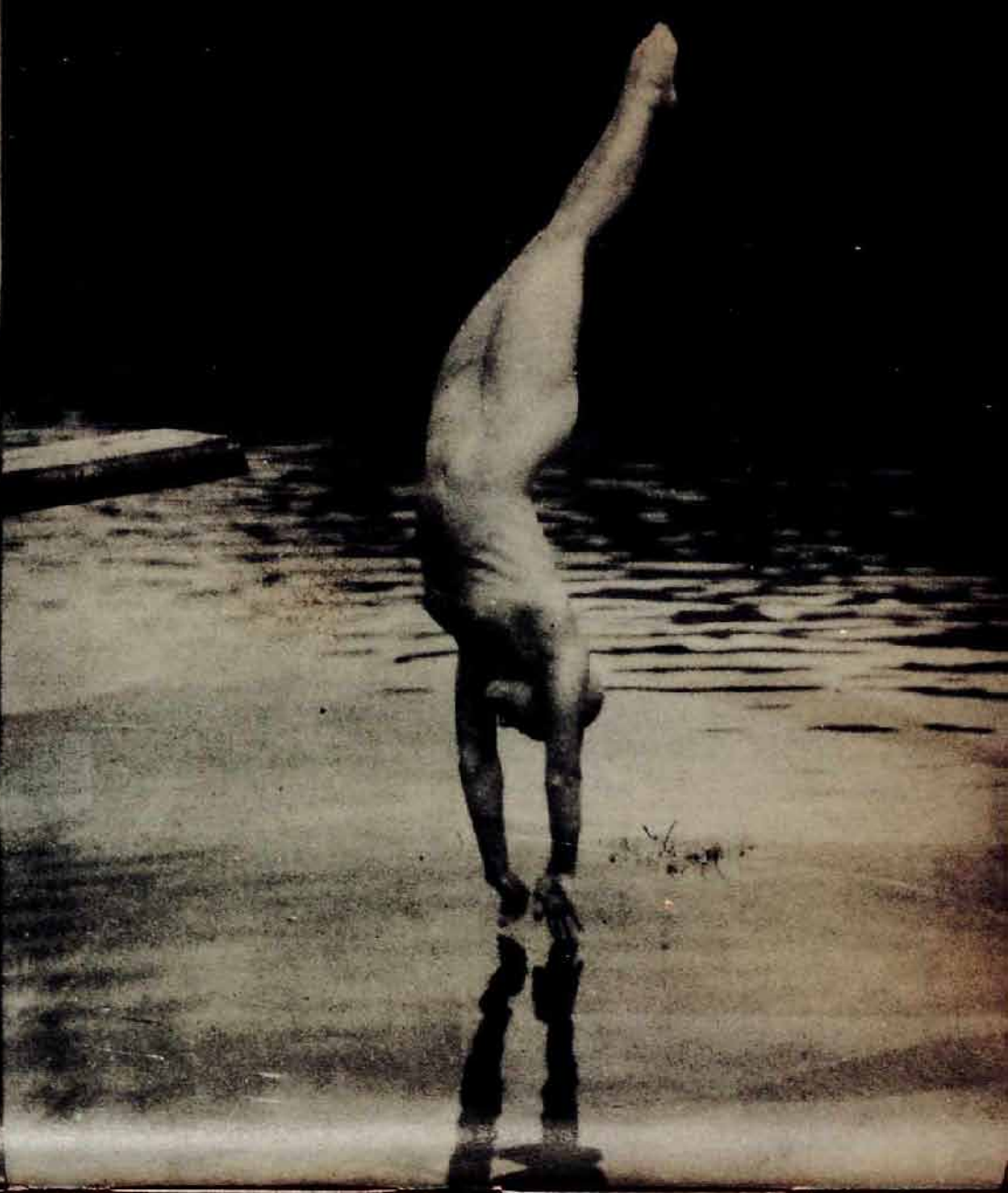
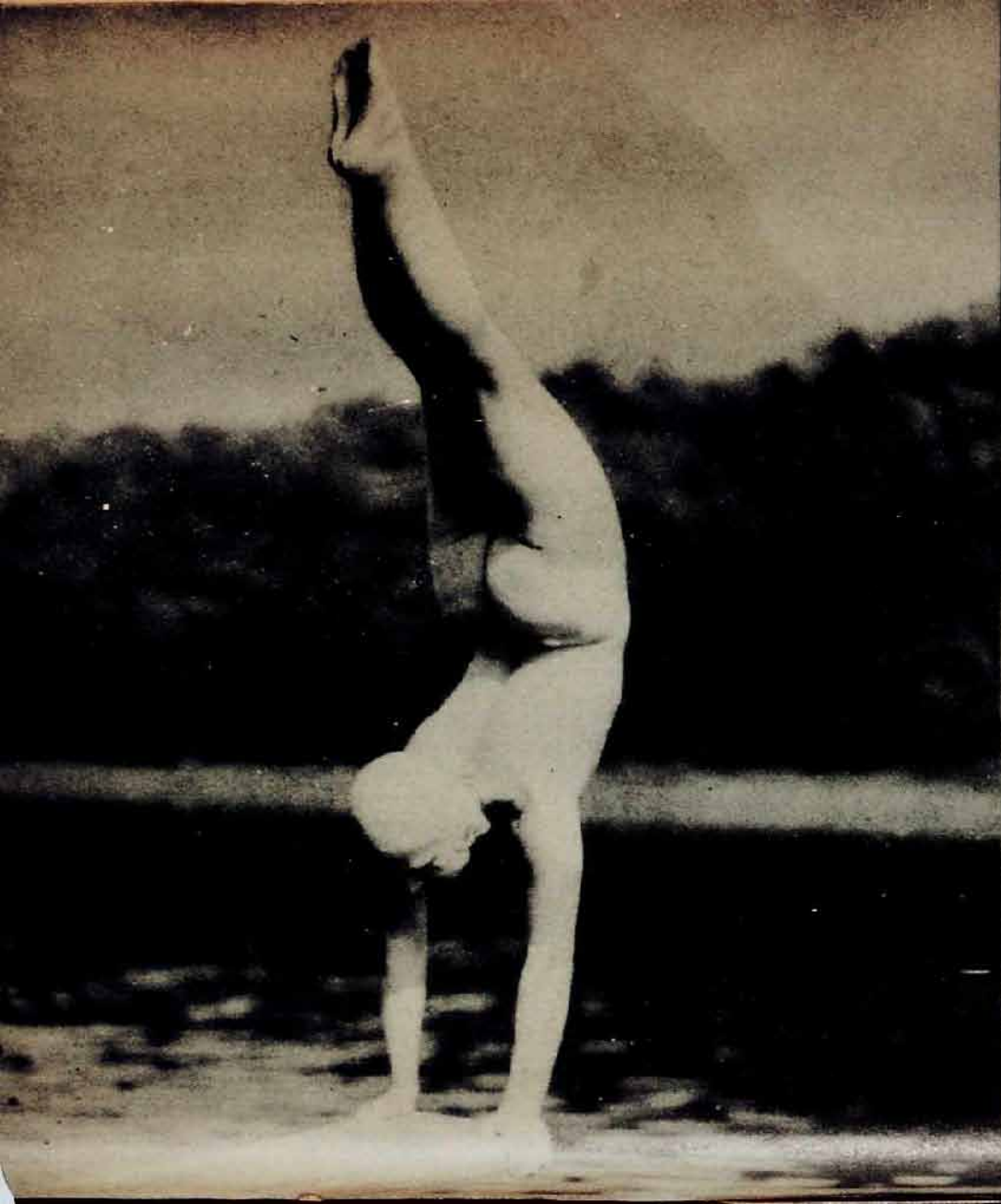
Granted that the sexes, segregated, may partake of all these activities in Turkish baths and gymnasiums, we still lack the complete solution which nudism offers. Nudism, above all else, is sociable. Husbands and wives who would be separated by conventional barriers are not separated by nudism. The serious problem of providing an escort for women vanishes. The escort need not wait ridiculously in the street — few would — while the lady he protects splashes about on the other side of a moral wall. The lady is relieved of the impossible task of finding escorts so sublimely devoted. Under nudism both may enjoy pleasures together — and pleasures divided are usually pleasures multiplied.

The hour announced for the opening of the great swimming-pool was 8:30 p.m. A quarter of an hour ahead of time I parked diagonally across the street from the entrance. I extinguished my lights. I watched.

For some time I saw little enough. Parties of two or three arrived on foot — so few of them that I wondered if I had mistaken the date. Every visitor was scrutinized at the entrance. Every visitor presented credentials of some kind.

The hands of the clock crept on. I stared — and realized suddenly that I, sitting in the dark, could see what the watchers at the brilliantly lighted entrance could not, for I was greatly entertained by an occurrence taking place not a hundred feet from the guards, who would have been even more interested in it.

The building housing the pool is surrounded by an iron picket fence. Three young men, unhurried, un-







LUNAPARK WELLENBAD

worried, unconcerned, had ambled slowly past the entrance. They had continued in their leisurely fashion to a spot where two pickets had been bent very slightly apart.

There they stopped. Evidently they knew the spot. They gazed about. I, unseen, gazed also.

Deliberately the first young man removed his coat and handed it to the others. He wriggled his legs between the bars. With considerable effort his shoulders and head followed. The achievement would have been impossible had not his friends seized the bars at the crucial moment and pulled them a fraction of an inch farther apart — and I understood why the performer had brought assistants with him.

His coat followed him through the bars. He donned it. The coat of the second young man followed — and the second young man himself, aided by his friends. Then the third young man imitated their example, and after they had disappeared into the darkness I strolled across the street to examine the bars myself and to attest the fact that had I not seen men pass between them, I should have sworn that the feat was an impossibility.

It was 8:45. I walked to the entrance, showed one of my membership cards, and was admitted upon payment of a fee of one mark. I was shown to a comfortable dressing-room, which locked automatically when I left. In accordance with the excellent system in vogue in Austria and in Germany, I was given no individual key. Instead I scrawled a word on the slate which hung in

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

the bath-house itself and turned it to the wall. The attendant would re-admit me whenever I wished — and would guard against error by requiring me to state what word would be found on the slate.

I proceeded to the showers. Their use was compulsory, and the rule was so whole-heartedly followed that a sign proclaimed that more than five minutes' use was "*verboden*." I passed through a trough of shallow water, walked through a short corridor, and found myself at the edge of the most extraordinary swimming-pool I have ever seen.

It was huge, and it was shaped like a keyhole. The rectangular part must have been seventy-five by a hundred and twenty-five feet. The circular part, in which the water gradually became shallower, was fully a hundred feet in diameter.

At the far end of the rectangular section were diving-boards, and underneath, on the other side of a metallic grille, a wave-making machine was in operation. Great waves travelled with rhythmic regularity the length of the pool, formed crests as the depth of the water lessened, broke as they entered the circular part, and supplied convincingly real surf to the bathers in the shallows.

High above the pool, and surrounding it on three sides, was a balcony. I visited it later. The spaces at the sides and end of the pool were railed in, and adjoining them, on a level three feet higher, were hundreds of tables in rows. Tablecloths were neatly spread on them; glass and silverware gleamed.

POT-BELLIES AND THE NEXT GENERATION

I was sure that I had not seen more than fifty persons enter the building. I glanced about me, and there were nearly three hundred.

There were men, women, and children. There was a far greater proportion of elderly persons than I had ever seen at other nudist gatherings. There was much grey hair. There were scores upon scores of pot-bellies.

All of the bathers were naked.

All of the waiters, standing expectantly by their tables, were dressed.

The Pot-Bellies and the Next Generation

The mysteries of the balconies lured me upstairs. At one side five ping-pong tables were in use. The contestants at each of four of the five were a man and a woman. At the fifth two middle-aged women, decidedly obese, played with a Teutonic seriousness which was not lightened by their complete lack of clothing.

At the other side of the balcony a variety of games were in progress. Four young people were playing with a rubber ball, which they caused to bounce on the floor, to the hand of the partner, and over a low net, whence it was returned in the same fashion. I watched them for some minutes, fascinated by their expertness. Other ball games, some of them quite new to me, were in full swing elsewhere.

I had visited the *Wellenbad* largely out of curiosity, but the invitation of the rhythmic waves was irresistible. I returned to the pool, I dived into the heavily chlo-

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

minated water, I swam, and flying on the crest of a breaker, I went "plop" into a large and friendly abdomen.

I apologized abjectly.

The owner of the abdomen, a cropped-haired, bullet-headed man in the fifties, accepted my apology graciously.

As at the seashore, a rope was stretched for the convenience of the bathers. I clung to it, with the breakers foaming thrillingly over me.

"Do you come here often?" I asked my acquaintance.

"Twice a week," he said, puffing. "And you?"

"This is my first visit."

"You'll come again."

"I hope so."

I climbed out and dove again into the best imitation of a sea that I have ever seen — excepting only the swimming-pools of transatlantic liners on really rough days.

A young girl raced me a length. "The waves stop soon," she explained. "First half an hour of waves; then half an hour without them. Gymnastics — and then more waves. *Es ist fabelhaft!* Fabulous!"

As in Vienna, I had eaten nothing at all before the swim. It was a mistake. In Vienna the swim had ended on the dot of nine, while here was a program which bade fair to last until midnight. My stomach began to clamour for sustenance — and I could see the waiters

POT-BELLIES AND THE NEXT GENERATION
bringing smoking dishes to a few bathers who had already dressed and had taken tables near the pool.

I decided to follow their example.

"You aren't going to exercise?"

"I *have* exercised," I said resolutely, swam a final length, hurried into my clothes, and selected a table.

I ordered. I noticed that people near me were smoking, and I lighted a cigarette. I turned to the pool.

Much had taken place during my brief absence. The waves had stopped, and the surface had quieted rapidly. Only a few swimmers were to be seen in the water. Instead more than two hundred of my late companions had gathered on the balconies to perform gymnastics. Three or four deep, their long ranks filled the side of the balcony which faced me. At the centre of the balcony, mounted on a pedestal, stood a nude instructor beating a tomtom. "*Eins! Zwei! Drei! Vier!*" he chanted, keeping time with complicated rhythms on the drum.

The waiter brought me a steak and a cup of steaming coffee, and I gave them my earnest attention. Here and there about me others were also eating.

I glanced up at the gymnasts. They were working hard, and they continued to work for a half-hour without more rest than that afforded by the alternation of heavy and light exercises. A final exercise, a particularly complicated roll on the tomtom, a hearty round of applause for the instructor, and there was a rush for the pool. The waves began again.

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After fifteen minutes of swimming, the tomtom sounded once more. The bathers reascended to the balcony, and I witnessed an astounding exhibition of self-massage.

The instructor, poised on his pedestal, demonstrated. The pupils followed his example to the rhythm of the tomtom. The muscles of the arms, of the chest and shoulders, of the abdomen, of the legs: one after another, self-massage, rubbing, slapping, stretching, kneading dealt with them. At the end every alternate bather bowed while his neighbour briskly slapped his back, a service which he returned an instant later. Another hearty round of applause, and the evening's exercises were over. Some of the participants hastened to the dressing-rooms; others returned to the pool. I understood the rationale of the procedure: enough exercise to induce vigorous perspiration; a rush to the pool (via the showers); a return for a thorough massage; and a sense of well-being which would last for hours.

I gazed at the remains of the food I had eaten, and wondered if I would not have done better had I followed the example of the others. I ordered a second cup of coffee. I lighted another cigarette.

"But you mustn't do that!" said a young woman who suddenly stood before me. "You may smoke during the gymnastics, but you must not smoke when the people return to the pool."

I apologized humbly, and, detecting my American accent, she agreed to join me in a cup of coffee.

"I am the secretary," she explained. "That was why I spoke to you."

I was delighted to meet her. "There are many things you can explain to me," I said. "One of the virtues of *Nacktkultur* is the attention it forces me to give to my body. The man who can hide a corporation under his clothes can forget its existence. I cannot — because tomorrow or next day a hundred people may see me without a stitch of clothing, and I am sufficiently vain to long for a presentable figure. Therefore I do not overeat; therefore I exercise; therefore I do not become obese; therefore I shall probably live longer than otherwise."

She smiled. "Go on."

"Until tonight I thought other men agreed with me; but now I hardly know what to think. I didn't know there were so many pot-bellies in Germany as I have seen in the last hour."

She laughed. "This is not a representative gathering."

"Good — but why isn't it?"

"There are fewer than three hundred people here tonight. Were you to visit us in the winter, you would find between five and six hundred. The absentees tonight are largely the young people — the shapely ones. They go to out-of-door *Gelände* during the week and over the week-ends. A swim here of an evening means nothing to them — except in winter! Our visitors tonight are mostly the older people, those who are tied down to business or to families and never get out into

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the open. Look at them, and judge for yourself. Only one out of four is at all sunburned; and of those only one out of four again is burned all over the body in true nudist fashion."

I gazed, and admitted that she was right.

"They are fat," she said, "because this is the sum total of their *Nacktkultur*. Until our next meeting they will have no exercise whatever. They will go to their offices and their homes. They will eat sausages and drink beer. They have lost six ounces tonight. They will gain a pound before they return."

"But vanity —"

"*Sie haben viel Nacktkultur gemacht. Nicht wahr?* You have practised a great deal of nudism. Isn't that so? You are judging by what you have seen at outdoor centres, where the proportion of young people is much larger. Here, among the older ones, vanity cannot lead to the same results. There are so many hopeless figures that everybody is sure his is not the worst." She laughed again. "But it's good for them, isn't it? If it weren't for tonight's exercise, think how much more awful they would be!"

I looked around. On the balcony one of the stoutest women I have ever seen was vigorously playing ping-pong. The sight was ludicrous and pathetic. But only a few feet away from me a naked young couple, one of the few present, brown, lean, good to look at, chatted, wholly unembarrassed, with older people seated dressed at a table on the other side of the railing. I could overhear their conversation. The young man had

POT-BELLIES AND THE NEXT GENERATION
recognized friends. He had brought his wife to their
table to introduce her.

“Some day,” I said in a low voice to my companion,
“those young people may resemble the woman on the
balcony.”

“Perhaps,” she said, “but perhaps not. When the
woman on the balcony was a girl, nudism did not exist.
The newer generation of Germans is starting life dif-
ferently. It is starting right.”

KLINGBERG

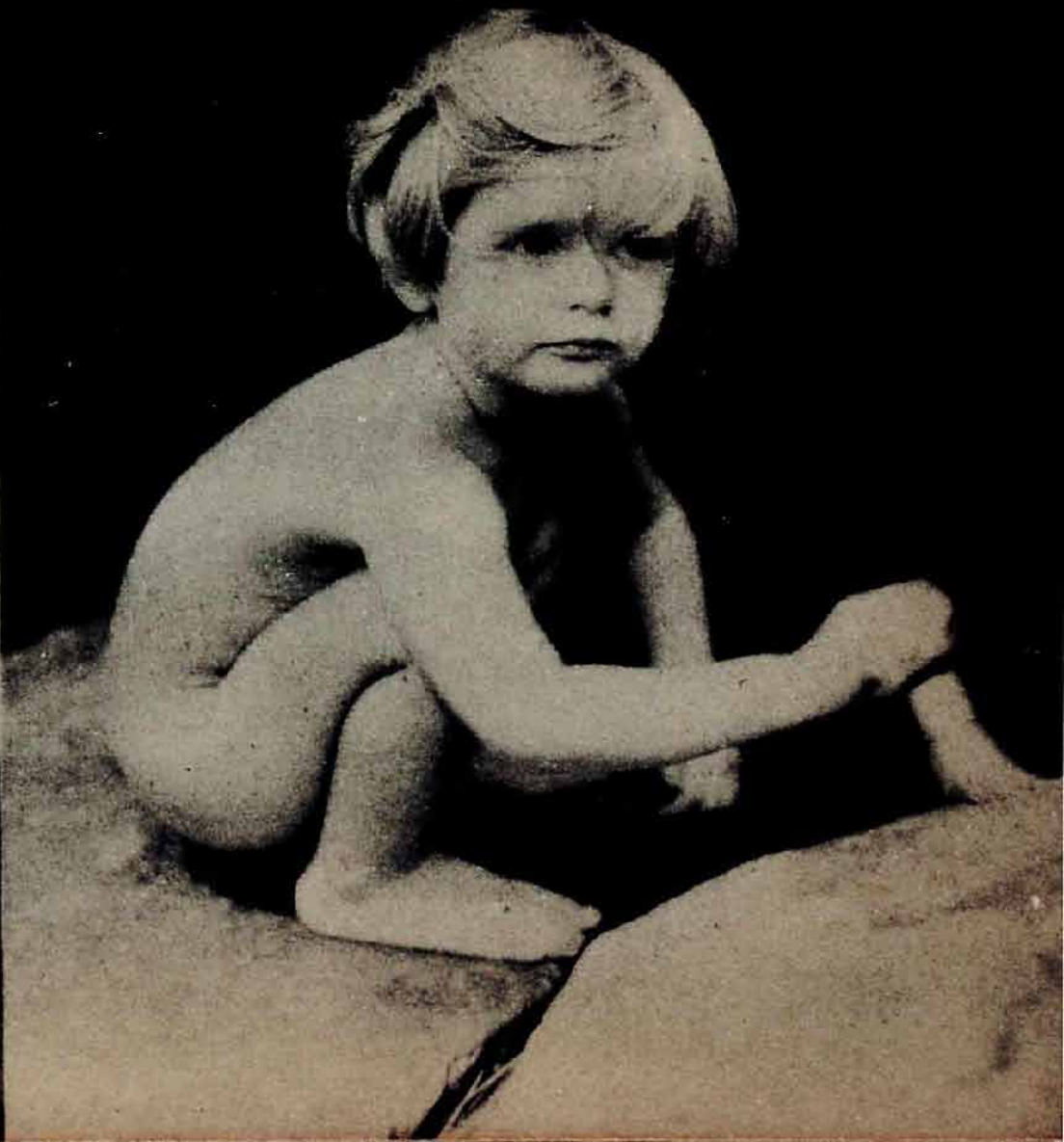
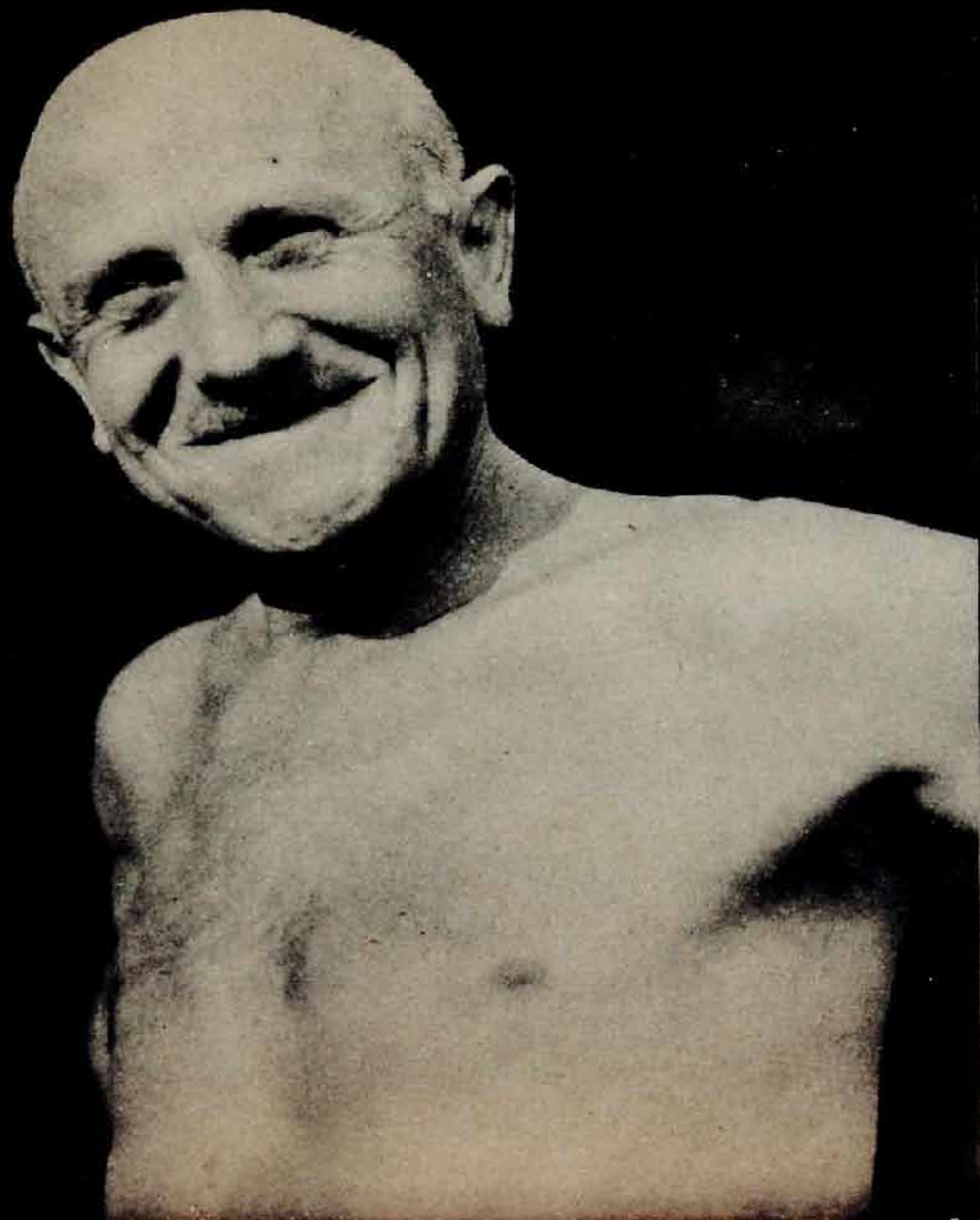


Paul Zimmermann

AN accident of geology is responsible for one of the most characteristic differences between eastern and western Germany. Building-stone, in a variety of colours, is abundant in the former — hence the hideous particoloured monuments and over-ornate public edifices which deface Berlin. In the latter a scarcity of stone has led to the greater use of brick, with the result that Hamburg, Lübeck, and the cities of Schleswig-Holstein and the neighbouring states have dignity, simplicity, and good taste.

From Lübeck, once the capital of the Hanseatic League, and still a great shipping centre, I drove north through flat, sandy country dotted with lakes. A splendid road, permitting almost any speed, led toward Eutin and Kiel. A spin of twenty minutes, and I turned right on a country road; a mile, and I turned right again. I recognized a much-photographed house. A sign on a gate announced: "Freilichtpark-Klingberg — Paul Zimmermann."

I walked to the *Landhaus* — the main cottage. I





PAUL ZIMMERMANN

found the office. A little brown gnome of a man with a squeaky voice greeted me. It was Zimmermann.

Zimmermann's history, to a large extent, is that of *Nacktkultur* in Germany. He stumbled onto it almost by accident more than twenty years ago. Having young children, he wished them to benefit by free exposure to the sun. More children were born — he has four daughters now — and he began to receive persons of congenial views at Klingberg. The grounds are most attractive. Visitors became more numerous. The development of the place proceeded as its popularity increased. When the national associations came into being, it affiliated with none of them. It remained an independent resort, a strange summer hotel differing from others solely by reason of its nudistic principles. It prospered, and then, with the spread of nudism throughout Germany, it began to encounter serious competition. But it had fulfilled its function: it had demonstrated that nudism attracts decent people, and that its influence upon them is the reverse of degenerative.

No profession lacks representation among the guests who have stopped at Klingberg. Ministers, professors, army officers and navy officers, doctors, lawyers, and engineers have been included in a population which has also had its quotas of the idle rich and of the idle poor. Klingberg has always been cosmopolitan; it is likely to become even more so.

Owing to the Merrills, it is better known to the English-speaking public than any other nudist centre.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

Owing also to the Merrills, it is better patronized by the English-speaking public than any other centre. Without exception, every Briton or American whom I met there had come as the result of reading *Among the Nudists*. But since the time, now nearly three years ago, that the Merrills visited it and proclaimed its charm, Klingberg has fallen upon evil days. It is no longer the only nudist centre in a large radius. The nudists of Hamburg have half a dozen *Gelände* in and near their own city; Lübeck and Kiel have centres. Former native visitors are provided for in the immediate neighbourhoods of their homes. Today Teutonic nudists need not travel — unless they wish to.

True, Klingberg offers an atmosphere of peace and repose which I have not known to be equalled elsewhere; but its charges, while low to the English-speaking visitors, are beyond the shrunk purses of many Germans. I spent eleven consecutive days there, including two week-ends, and the large crowds of the days of the Merrills were not in evidence. The success of nudism has resulted in the lessened popularity of its pioneer centre.

I introduced myself to Herr Zimmermann. It was the end of July, and it was the height of the season. I had made no reservation in advance, but there was an empty room in the main house, and I engaged it without delay.

"You will want to see the grounds," he said, and we set forth on a tour of investigation.

The property lies on all three sides of a *T* outlined

by the junction of two country roads. The *Landhaus* and some acres of garden lie in the right inner angle. The *Freilichtpark* itself, with its extensive grounds, lies in the left inner angle. A rural inn, the *Waldschänke*, and a combination beauty-parlour and photographic-goods shop are at the cross-roads. Atop the *T*, and shielded by two well-planned fences, is a field running to the edge of the *Grosser Pönitzer See*, a good-sized lake margined with bulrushes.

The rules are of the simplest. In and about the *Landhaus* and while crossing public property, decorous costume is in order. Once on the other side of the stout fences protecting the park or the lake sections, clothing may be — but need not be — discarded. With a tact unusual in Germany the rules contain only a single “*verboten*” : quite correctly they forbid the use of cameras without the knowledge and previously given consent of the subject. But the rules do not command nudity in the places designed for it. They confine themselves to a sounder and more satisfactory suggestion: “Every visitor may wear bathing-costume or not, as he pleases. Since, however, nudism is and must remain the fashion, persons who for whatever reason do not wish to bathe entirely naked — least of all in the company of other persons whom they do not know — are requested to keep their distance from the nudists. Twenty-five acres of variegated grounds make possible an unforced division among visitors whose points of view may differ. Persons interested only in observing the nude bathing of others are invited to leave the park.”

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Nothing could be more reasonable, and while there are legends that there have been guests of improper character, and that they have come into conflict with the last provision, I have been unable to substantiate them. As I have previously pointed out, debauchees would find nothing to attract them at nudist centres.

“The use of wine, beer, and liquors, as well as that of tobacco, is not permitted in the park.”

If one bears in mind that nudism began as a therapeutic movement, the fact that it is so often coupled with abstinence and non-smoking may be readily understood. In France it has already freed itself from the former; in Switzerland and in America it has freed itself from the latter. But the prohibitions of Klingberg are merely nominal. The Waldschänke dispenses liquid refreshment to those desiring it at any time: it is necessary only to dress and to leave the Klingberg grounds. To do without tobacco is harder for most visitors, but several spots are reserved for smokers, and the management tolerantly closes its eyes to occasional cigarettes indulged in elsewhere.

Freilichtpark

We crossed the public road to the *Freilichtpark*, a splendid tract of rolling land, shielded from unfriendly eyes by a high board fence.

We walked through a flat area devoted to a garden. At our left was a small building, as solidly built as the main one. “The park house,” said Herr Zimmermann.

FREILICHTPARK

It was located on ground which fell away from us. The side which we faced was given up to small dressing-rooms whose doors opened onto the path we were treading; the side opposite, two storeys high, contained sleeping-rooms.

We entered a wood in which predominated spruce and yellow pine — planted twenty-five years ago by my host. Here and there, in shady recesses, were cabins. For the weary souls who enjoy the return to nature, I cannot imagine more idyllic retreats. Privacy, no light save that of the sun through the trees, the quiet of the forest, the rustle of the wind through the branches, and a soil heavily carpeted with piny humus over which to roam barefoot — surely nothing could be more delightful. I wandered through the forest naked on many occasions. They never failed to give me a wholesome, ecstatic thrill.

We emerged from the trees on a gentle slope overlooking two ring-tennis courts. Half a dozen naked men and women were playing. A dozen others lay on a sloping lawn at the side, revelling in the hot sun.

Both Herr Zimmermann and I were fully dressed, but they were not embarrassed by our presence — nor, for that matter, was I by theirs. The average individual is so habituated to clothes that he is unlikely to notice the details of garments worn by others. A stranger is well dressed or badly dressed, he observes — and lets it go at that. I was so accustomed to nakedness that I noticed faces first, figures, good or bad, next, and then returned to faces once more. I have heard much argu-

ment among the uninformed about the æsthetics of nakedness: whether or not the nude body is less attractive than the same body clad. To the nudist there is no ground for dispute: the body is its own clothing, and he is unlikely to give it close attention. A particularly lovely body — or an especially hideous one — stands out in any assemblage; but probably no more so than would the same individual garmented.

“There is another American here,” said Herr Zimmermann, “Herr Doktor Bentham.”

I spoke to him, and he came running, a naked man of sixty-two, to shake hands with me. “Gosh, it’s good to meet somebody who can talk Yankee! I don’t understand a word of German.” Nevertheless he had found his way to Lübeck, to the branch railway which runs to Dorf Gleschendorf, and thence to Klingberg.

“Aren’t there any English here?” I asked.

“Yes; but they’re not the same as Yankees. They don’t talk our lingo, and they don’t know the States. I told ’em I hailed from Denver, and they asked me if my wife did her shopping in New York!”

He was interested in heliotherapy, he told me later, had used it on his patients with considerable success, and had come to Germany to study its effects among the nudists. He was the first American of either sex whom I encountered at a European nudist centre, and the only American I had met in nearly three months. Lean, with weather-beaten cheeks and a prominent Adam’s apple, he was as typical of New England as of the far West.

FREILICHTPARK

He introduced me to a Scottish couple and to a number of Englishmen. Every one of them had come as the result of reading the Merrills' writings.

Herr Zimmermann smiled. "I see you have found company. I think I shall leave you here." He wandered off through the forest.

Dr. Bentham looked at me curiously. "Is this going to be your first try at nudism?"

"Wait till you see my coat of tan!" I said. Countless hours in the hot sun had bronzed me from head to foot.

I went back to the dressing-rooms and left my clothes in the least crowded one. I returned naked to the playground. Dr. Bentham surveyed my brown epidermis. "Full-blooded Apache!" he remarked.

A game of ring-tennis was in progress. I played.

"We'll have time for a dip before lunch," said Robson, the Scot.

A dozen of us visited the *Moorteich*, a pond of brownish water surrounded by decaying vegetation. We dived in and rested on the soft sedgy mass just under water on the other side. We thrashed back and scrambled out.

"The pump!"

It was en route to the dressing-rooms, on a path which skirted the forest. We took turns at the shower, each pumping his share of water into the tank overhead.

We shook the water from our bodies and dried our feet on the grass.

I dressed. The others slipped into "training-suits,"

two-piece affairs consisting of baggy woollen blouses and trousers. As costumes they were most decorous; and they possessed the virtue of permitting dressing or undressing in an absolute minimum of time.

I drove to Lübeck and bought a training-suit the following day.

The Guests

The keynote of the house was simplicity. The lowest part contained the cellars and the offices. The ground floor proper contained two rooms large enough to accommodate thirty guests at three dining-tables, a small reading- and music-room, a kitchen, a hall, and a lavatory.

Over the fireplace, in the largest room, hung a Christus. Underneath was a bust of Nietzsche flanked by smaller busts of Plato and Demosthenes. In the fire-screen was cut the Swastika — the *Hakenkreuz* — emblem of the Hitler party.

“ Christ — Plato — Nietzsche — Hitler: you are following the example of Marcus Aurelius and worshipping all the gods there are,” I said. “ But why Demosthenes in the place which should be sacred to Diogenes? ”

“ Why Diogenes? ” asked Herr Zimmermann.

“ Was he not the first nudist? Was it not Diogenes the Cynic, sitting naked in his tub, who replied to Alexander’s question: ‘ What service can I render thee? ’ with the words: ‘ Stand thou from between me and the sun ’? ”

THE GUESTS

The second floor was given up to sleeping-chambers, each door bearing a metal plate engraved with the name of a German immortal: Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Lessing, Winckelmann, Kant. Goethe had a private bath, and was occupied by the Scottish couple. Nietzsche had a nice bay window. I slept in Nietzsche. The American doctor roomed in Winckelmann. A young woman who was a professional dancer slept in Kant. There was a dark closet near Lessing; it was much in demand for photographic purposes.

A door marked "Olymp" led to the attic and to a dormitory. The Sparta Club had cured me of democracy, and Uederland had diminished my interest in dormitories. I did not investigate the attic, and I have no idea who slept in it.

I amused myself by making a census of the persons whom I encountered at Klingberg during a stay of nearly two weeks. I append it:

1. Zimmermann, too full of German literature to be a good business man.

2. Frau Zimmermann, usually busy with cooking, but not too busy to see that there were fresh flowers in every room in the house, a thoughtful touch which should be — but is not — imitated elsewhere.

3-6. The Zimmermann daughters: (a) Waldtreute, the busiest little person I have ever met; (b) Helga, who suffered from bone-tuberculosis, and who helped by shelling peas; (c) Sigrun, who assisted about the house; (d) the oldest daughter, who worked in the near-by beauty-parlour.

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7-10. The Fishers: (a) the business manager; (b) his wife; (c) Gisela and (d) Harald, children who discovered my car one minute after it arrived and gave me their welcome company thereafter wherever it went.

11. Lühr, a blond Apollo who was a professional dancer in winter and taught the gymnastic classes at Klingberg during the summer.

12. The American, Dr. Bentham, who played a formidable game of bridge.

13-15. Three other Americans who arrived the day I left, a party headed by a millionaire interested in heliotherapy.

16-17. The Scottish couple, he the vice-president of a great British industrial corporation, she a woman of charming personality who reminded me of Whistler's portrait of his mother.

She wore the gold *Nacktkultur* emblem on a chain about her throat.

"Are you going to wear it when you return to England?" I asked.

"Why not? Only the nudists know what it signifies. Other people will look at it and say: 'How pretty!'"

Under the circumstances I refrain from describing the emblem.

18. Another Scotchman, who, unlike most Scots that I have met, actually lived in Scotland.

19-21. Three Englishmen, (a) loud, (b) quiet, (c) very quiet. The two last were together a great deal. The first justified nudism by the extraordinary argu-

THE GUESTS.

ment that the perspiration of some individuals is destructive to garments.

"Think what would happen if a woman of that kind took up laundering!" he said to me. "Unless she adopted nudism, she might ruin the clothes."

"If she adopted it her perspiration might eat a hole through the floor," I commented.

22-23. An English college-boy studying at Hamburg over the summer, who came to Klingberg every week-end with his mother. He said, though I am inclined to consider it an exaggeration, that the nudist movement in England already numbers over ten thousand adherents.

24. A German-American-German, ex-officer in the German marine, ex-officer in the American Coast Guard, now again officer in the German marine.

"How did you get a commission in the United States Coast Guard?"

"I did it. I'm not the only alien who did it, either."

"Why did you quit?"

"I made so much money that I could retire to Germany." He winked. "Rum-runners: so much for every case that went through. But I'm too young to quit altogether. I love the sea. I've taken a berth as second officer on the *Brontosaurus*. Cross on it some time, and I'll see that you're transferred to a choicer cabin."

25-26. Two Frenchmen, one who looked typically French, and one who looked typically American Indian. I had met the latter frequently at the Sparta Club.

27. An Egyptian who spoke fluent French, bad Eng-

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

lish, and no German, and wore dazzling dressing-gowns. He was anxious to introduce rules in a game of ring-tennis which had thrived without them. Result: the game did not alter, but he sustained more than the average number of sprained knuckles.

28. A Russian musician.

29-30. A Swiss dentist and his wife. It was their first try at nudism, and she was already a convert.

31-33. A Danish woman who had come in a chauffeur-driven car with her seven-year-old son.

34-35. A stout Bavarian journalist and his stout wife.

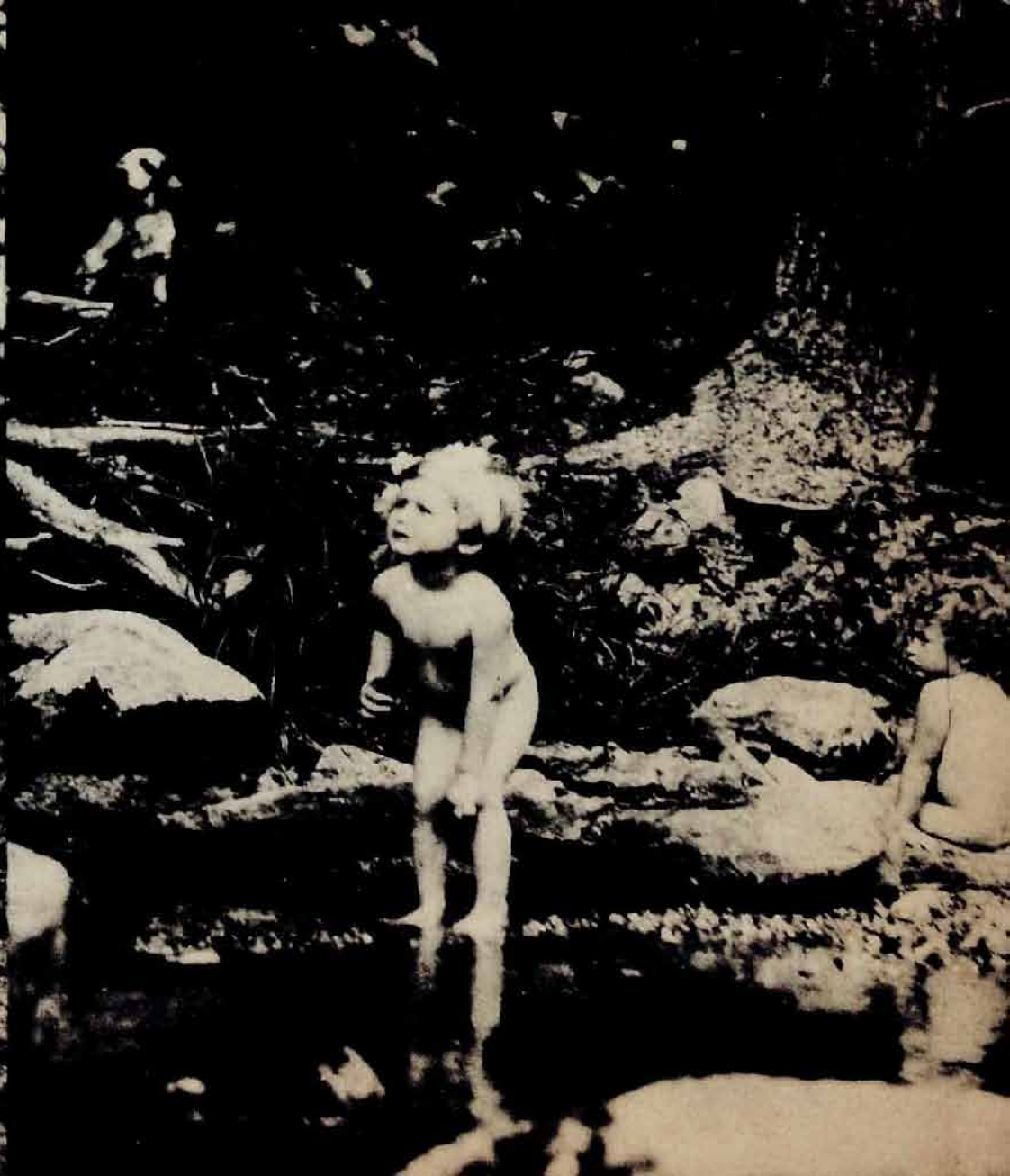
"Why do you come here when there are *Bünde* in your own city?" It chanced that I had visited a centre in her neighbourhood.

"I'll tell you a secret: my husband is the editor of an ultra-conservative paper which opposes *Nacktkultur*. . . ."

36. A German, aged seventy-six, who did not take part in general exercises, but stood off to one side and performed gentler gymnastics more suitable to his years. He was so unsociable, and so seldom seen except at meal-times, that I never had a word with him.

37-38. Two German professors: (a) old, and modest; (b) young, and anything but modest. The latter decided to discuss American poetry with me.

"I haf read all the American poets," he said in heavily accented English, "Seenclair Lewees; Dreiser; Hairgesheimer; Hemingvay."





JULIAN STRANGE *vs.* RUDOLF VON LABAN

"You are confusing the German '*Dichter*' and the English 'poet,'" I said. "You Germans apply the term '*Dichter*' — which means 'poet' — to poets, dramatists, and novelists indiscriminately. With us a 'poet' is always a writer of verse. None of the men you mentioned ever wrote a line of poetry."

"*Ach, so?* Who then are your 'poets'?" he challenged.

"Robert Frost. E. A. Robinson. Carl Sandburg. Edna Millay."

"Hah! I haf neffer heard of one of them!"

39-50. Miscellaneous Germans, including two engineers (one of them proud of a face scarred in student duels), lawyers and business men, with or without wives, salesmen, doctors, teachers.

51-60. Unattached German women, coming from various social strata.

61-67. Finally, the servants employed by the establishment, all of whom practised nudism during their hours off. An interesting-looking woman spoke to me one day while we were both in the lake. I looked at her more closely. She was the laundress.

Julian Strange vs. Rudolf von Laban

I was up early in the morning.

"Breakfast?"

"Gymnastics!"

I followed the procession which headed for the play-

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

ground. We left our clothes in the dressing-rooms. Shivering a little, we sought the path through the woods.

Dew was on the grass. The pine and spruce needles underfoot were moist. We breathed the tingling air of early morning.

Lühr, beating a tomtom, was gathering the class together.

We ranged in a circle, twenty naked men and women with chattering teeth and hearty appetites.

The tomtom commanded, and I began my acquaintance with the system of exercises devised by Rudolf von Laban, until then unknown to me.

“On your toes! Up! Down! Up! Down! Left foot! Right foot! Higher! Run! Run faster!”

The beat accelerated as we pranced about in a circle.

We resumed our places. In accordance with a command we flung our arms downward, exhaled, and relaxed.

“On your toes! Arms up! Kick! Right foot! Left foot! Higher! Higher! Run!”

We relaxed again.

A difficult squatting exercise, coupled with a kick, led definitely into movements associated with the dance. What had begun as gymnastics became gymnastic dancing.

Nudist or not, I began to dislike the system. Dr. Bentham, not far from me, was going through the evolutions with the grace of a rheumatic terrapin. Robson, the Scot, was not much better. One of the women was

JULIAN STRANGE VS. RUDOLF VON LABAN
a professional dancer, and it was a delight to watch her; but I respected the female sex too highly to allow my eyes to rest long on the others. Their awkwardness was harrowing.

Came a movement which combined a leap into the ether with a would-be graceful movement of the upper extremities. It was executed at a run. I had seen it often enough on the stage as part of terpsichorean interpretations of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," and other ebullient compositions, but never before had I attempted it.

"Do I look as idiotic as you do, doing this?" I hissed to Robson.

"Ye look warsse!" he replied, and I knew it was true.

"I'm going to quit," I declared. I did so.

The teacher came to my side. "*Was ist los, Herr Strange?*"

"If God had wished me to fly," I said, "He would have given me wings and feathers."

"You are not doing any more badly than the others."

"The thought that I am doing even half so badly is unbearable," I replied.

"Come on; try it again."

The outrage to my dignity was too great — and I was choking with laughter. "I am going to sit down at the side," I said, "but I am not going to watch. I must control myself — and the sight is too, too awful. When it's all over, I'll join you in the *Moorteich*."

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The circle resumed its vain leaps toward the blue sky. "Quitter!" taunted Robson.

"Call me anything you like! If you could only see yourself in a mirror!"

"You'll never learn if you don't try!" he whispered on the next round.

"That's a great consolation," I said. "I don't want to learn. . . . Have you ever seen an educated seal?"

"No, why?"

"You remind me of one I used to know. The seal is the least graceful of animals — and the other seals considered him awkward."

But I had perspired a little, and a dive into the *Moorteich* was a joy.

"I foresee," said Mrs. Robson, as she lowered herself into the water, "that whichever of you two photographs the other at gymnastics first is going to live on blackmail the rest of his life."

"I foresee more than that," I replied. "We are nudists. We believe in nudism. Let us forbear from taking pictures of our gymnastics, or we shall wreck the movement before it gets well started. I don't mind being seen naked; but I should object to being witnessed in the von Laban poses even if I were fully dressed."

After breakfast the gymnastic teacher argued with me. "Suppose you do look foolish; the others aren't looking at you."

"I'm looking at myself. My mental eye gets twenty

JULIAN STRANGE *vs.* RUDOLF VON LABAN
feet away, and when it sees what I'm doing, it's embarrassed."

The professional dancer came to his aid. "Don't you realize," she said in French, a language which she spoke fluently and of which Lühr understood no word, "that the von Laban system is one of the greatest discoveries of the twentieth century? It is epoch-making! It is *magnifique!*"

"For dancers."

"When you say it is not good, you make yourself ridiculous."

"Doubtless; but less ridiculous than the system makes me." I turned to the teacher. "I am an American, Herr Lühr. I don't pretend to understand German calisthenics. Perhaps I should have started with them twenty years earlier. As it is, I greatly prefer our army setting-up exercises."

"Why?" he demanded.

"Why?" echoed the dancer, "when they are so completely out of date?"

"Because a man of a certain age can do them without making an absolute ass of himself."

They argued with me, but while I indulged in every other form of exercise, and ultimately regained Lühr's respect by beating him at swimming, I never again attempted the gymnastics of Rudolf von Laban.

The Extraordinary is Usual

An ideal day: American setting-up exercises in the privacy of my room; a swim in the *Moorteich*; breakfast; the mail (which arrived regularly); ring-tennis; a swim; ring-tennis; another swim; a sun-bath; another swim; another sun-bath; a program of varied physical activities interspersed with chats with the other guests. I rarely went swimming oftener than eight times a day, and never less than three.

After lunch, a fearsome vegetarian meal, to the lake, there to bask until time for a swim; after the swim, the lawn, there to bask until it was time for another: it was a joyous, carefree life, but it was not a lazy one, for my portable typewriter accompanied me and clicked busily while I sat on the grass. I was engaged upon a fearful task: a German version of one of my novels was about to go to press, and it was my duty to list the passages in which the translator had failed to catch the meaning of the original text.

Between times non-nudist dips in the Baltic at Timmendorf Strand or at Scharbeutz, both near by — and chess, an ideal game for basking nudists — and arguments on every topic in the world. The former Coast Guard officer regaled me with anecdotes (there could be no doubt of his prosperity, for he became engaged to one of the female visitors before he left); the dancer explained how much easier it would be for her to find employment now that her skin was so artistically bronzed; the younger Frenchman, my fellow-member

of the Sparta Club, had much to say of the status of nudism in France and in Germany; and the three children, Gisela, Harald, and the Danish youngster (whose name remained unpronounceable for me) discovered in which pocket of the training-suit I was accustomed to secrete German chocolates for them, and searched through all of the suits until they found mine.

A new-comer at the lake-side.

"*Guten Tag,*" I said.

"*Guten Tag,*" he answered.

"*Sind Sie hier neulich angekommen?*"

"*Jawohl,*" and he rattled away in German.

A young German girl, who had overheard our conversation, broke into spasms of laughter.

I turned to her. "What is the joke?"

She was off into another spasm.

My new acquaintance looked at me in bewilderment, and my expression must have matched his.

"*Aber es ist so komisch!*" she exploded at length, "*so ganz und gar komisch!* To hear you two talking German! You with an American accent! He with an English accent! Why don't you talk English?"

We looked at each other. "Do you happen to speak English?" I asked the new-comer in that language.

"I ought to," he said. "I'm from Edinburgh."

A young Scotchman studying drawing, he had come to Klingberg because it promised a plentiful supply of models and an abundance of natural poses. Rodin, the great French sculptor, used to fill his studio with nude men and women so that they might give him ideas for

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newer and less artificial attitudes. The Scot was following Rodin's example in a less costly manner. I have often wondered why so few artists are to be found at nudist centres, when one would conceive them to offer irresistible attractions to them. In the course of visiting a score of such places I have encountered only three painters and no sculptors at all. Is it possible that the majority of artists prefer the Quartier Latin of Paris, with its undertone of gay wickedness, to what Jean Achard, himself not a nudist, refers to as "the chastity of nudism"?

The girl who had brought us together listened while I talked with the Scot. "Don't you agree?" I said to her.

"*Aber ich verstehe kein Wort Englisch,*" she lamented. "I don't understand a word of English."

It was a fitting climax for an extraordinary episode.

But the extraordinary was commonplace at Klingberg. We entered the water, the Scot and I. The girl accompanied us. Half a dozen others followed.

A boat containing three fully dressed fishermen approached swiftly. They leaped out into the shallows. They had hooked a large pike, and he had snagged the line among the reeds.

We were interested. We thronged around them as they completed the capture and triumphantly held up a savage-looking fish which must have been all of two feet in length.

We inquired with what bait it had been caught; how

long it had taken; whether they had caught many others like it.

It simply did not occur to us that we were stark naked — and if the fishermen noticed it, it interested them less than did their fish. They climbed into their boat again — without hurry and without delay.

They waved us a cheerful farewell.

We continued bathing.

Twentieth-Century Eden

Evenings at Klingberg were never tedious. On my first night there was a motion picture in the *Landhaus*. An amateur cinematographer had filled a reel with pictures of the guests. Two nights later there was an exhibition of folk-dancing by eight of the Klingberg women at Scharbeutz, the next village. We trooped over to watch the performance, which was followed by general dancing. The next night nine of us, a load which taxed the springs of my car, journeyed to the Scharbeutz Casino, a stone's throw from the Bight of Lübeck, and danced, drank with European moderation, and returned in the moonlight.

On the way home we ran along the seashore for some distance. "Wouldn't it be fun if we took off all our clothes and went swimming?" somebody suggested.

I know American resorts and ultra-fashionable American societies in which the suggestion would have been received with acclaim; but nude bathing on the sly

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

did not attract a group which daily indulged in it openly, and there was no second to the motion.

Nightly crowds gathered in the Waldschänke, where wine was cheap, beer was cold, and classic music (on a phonograph) alternated with dance tunes. The non-vegetarians ate there — or at Die Vier Linden — or at Margaretenhöhe — and Lübeck, a large city, was less than half an hour's drive away.

The vegetarian meals at Klingberg could not be compared with similar menus at the Sparta Club. The French, with their intuition for such things, make a succession of vegetable dishes appetizing by serving them in courses, and seasoning them with shrewd dressings. At Klingberg the bulk of the meal was placed on the table at one time, and not even the presence of other dishes atoned for the invariable offering of potatoes. The French have made the eating of food a pleasant and ceremonial ritual; the Germans might well imitate them. I mention in passing that excellent mushrooms (*Marasmius oreades*), too seldom eaten in the United States, figured occasionally on the Klingberg menu.

It was at Klingberg, however, that I made the acquaintance of *Kirschensuppe* and *Himbeersuppe*, cherry-soup and raspberry-soup, German atrocities which were served at the beginnings of some meals. I guarantee them to cure any non-Teuton of inclinations toward vegetarianism, and after encountering the first I visited one of the neighbouring inns and feasted on steak.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY EDEN

One meal at Klingberg was invariably enjoyable, and that was five o'clock tea. Tables were spread in the shade of the park house, hostesses took their places in a near-by cabin, and tea and cakes were consumed with as great formality as would have been observed in any drawing-room.

There were always between twenty and forty persons present, of whom a few were fully dressed, particularly if the afternoon was chilly, half a dozen or more attired in robes of some kind, and a full fifty per cent entirely naked. In a previous chapter I referred to the unpleasant impression created upon me by the miscellaneous costuming at Uederland. Klingberg was notably different. What costumes there were were complete: complete dress, complete *négligé*, or complete nudity. They were appropriate to the time and place. They were neither offensive nor irritating, as was the presence, at Uederland, of men who had discarded coats but not vests, women who had removed blouses but not skirts, and various individuals who allowed themselves to be seen clad only in articles of underwear. The distinction may smack of captiousness, but it is real: nudity as a complete costume is more formal, hence more appropriate upon such an occasion, than is the informality of partial clothing.

I jotted down, for my amusement, such notes as a society reporter might have taken:

“At the head of one table was Professor A, of the University of Berlin. He was fully clad. At his right was Frau Doktor B, wife of the well-known surgeon.

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She was neatly attired in a smile. Next her were Monsieur C, of Paris, dressed in a wrist-watch, and Fräulein D, of Lübeck, wearing sandals and a jade bracelet. Among the others present were the Mesdames E and F, the former in lavender pyjamas, the latter in a well-fitting coat of tan.

“Herr Julian Strange, who dropped in, asked the company if he might take a photograph. He received unanimous consent except from Herr Zimmermann, who expressed the desire to put on ‘*Licht-Kleid*’ first.” (“*Licht-Kleid*” — “dress of light” — is the only costume that may be donned by doffing any other.)

“When Herr Zimmermann was ready, Herr Strange took a photograph.”

It was good fun, and I have never been more at my ease at conventional teas.

Klingberg is a delightful place, even though it was not at its best when I was there. Like the rest of the world, it was suffering from lack of funds. The only medicine-ball — there should have been six! — had been sent to the cobbler’s for repairs and did not return. One of the two rings used for ring-tennis came to the end of its endurance and was not replaced. A new one would have cost seventy cents. And except for a “*Schwing-Ball*,” which could be used by only two persons at a time, and which was seen once only, no balls of any kind, large or small, were to be found on the premises. The omission was serious. Nudism and exer-

TWENTIETH-CENTURY EDEN

cise go hand in hand, and the variety of exercise was not sufficiently great.

I like to imagine what could be accomplished at Klingberg with the use of only a little money. There are miles of delightful roads. An investment in riding-horses would pay for itself quickly. The lake would be the better for a dozen canoes. I should have been glad to rent one. The great level area as one enters the park is ideal for tennis. The consistency of the soil is right, and the cost of building courts would be small. Finally, the vegetarian régime might well be supplemented, as at Sparta, by meat dishes offered at additional cost. Since English and Americans are so largely catered to, an effort to gratify their tastes could not fail to bring results.

Robson and half a dozen others levelled cameras at me as I began to load my nine suit-cases into the car.

“Don’t think it’s because some of us have happened to read some of your books,” said Robson; “don’t think it’s because of your fame — if any — that we’re snapping you — and your luggage.”

I laughed. “What is it, then?”

The shutter of his camera clicked. “We want to show the rest of the world,” he said, “how an American nudist travels.”

EGESTORF



Through Darkest Germany

HERR LÜHR, gymnastic teacher at Klingberg, was mournful, for I had mentioned that I intended to visit the Sonnenland-Gelände at Egestorf, another well-known nudist centre, upon leaving Klingberg.

“ I have always wished to visit Egestorf,” lamented Lühr. “ It is only a half-day away, but I have never been able to go there.”

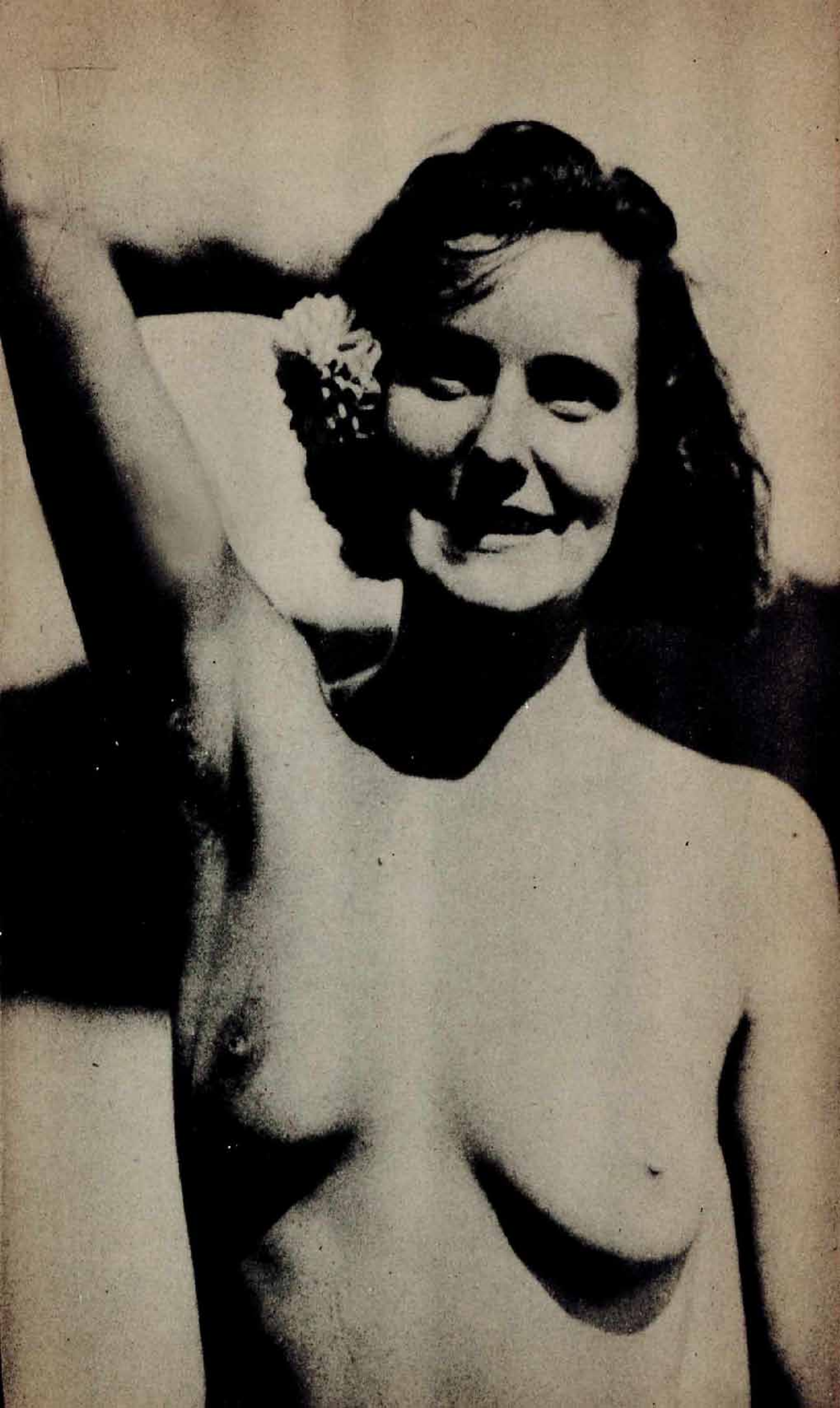
“ Come with me,” I invited.

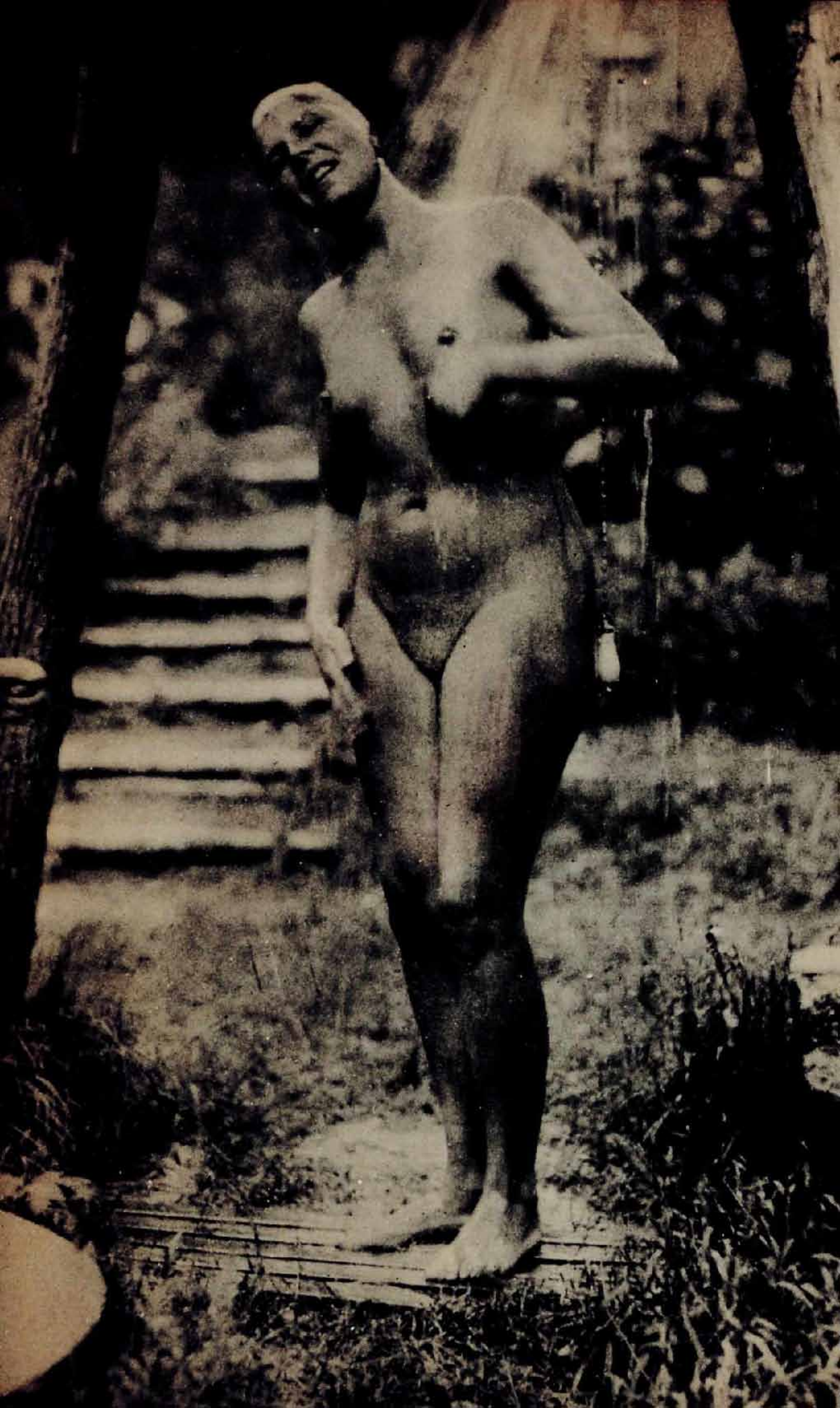
“ My salary here is nothing. I teach calisthenics — and get free board and lodging in return.”

“ Come with me as my guest,” I amplified.

“ Do you mean it? Do you really mean it? ” I have never seen a man more suddenly transported from the depths of dejection to joy. His thanks were profuse. And then an idea struck him: “ Herr Strange, when was your automobile washed last? ”

“ The last time it rained. I haven't been near a place where I could have it properly washed for more than a week.”





THROUGH DARKEST GERMANY

He beamed. "Drive it to the lake now, and I will give it the best wash it has ever had."

That was how an American-made car exposed first its right flank and then its left flank to the waters of the Grosser Pönitzer See and was scrubbed, outside and in, in approved Klingberg fashion, by a man who wore no clothes whatever while engaged in the task. It joined the small and select circle of cars which, like their owners, have gone nudist.

We drove south, Lübeck — Hamburg — Harburg — and left the excellent main highway for a wretched narrow road taking a south-easterly direction across the Lüneburger Heide. The right of the road was cobbled; the left was rutted dirt. We jounced along over the cobbles until they became unbearable, tried the dirt and found it worse, reduced our speed to a bare fifteen miles an hour, and bumped along through Hittfeldt, Jesteburg, and Hanstedt, insignificant villages which are merely dots on the map. Signposts were none too numerous. It was assumed, no doubt, that a traveller enterprising enough to wander into the heart of a rural section would provide himself with a compass, a sextant, and a large-scale chart.

A hamlet which we identified as Egestorf: we jolted through it to find ourselves unexpectedly in Lübberstedt, the next village. A passing farmer directed us. We wandered into Evendorf. North and south, east and west, we hunted the elusive Sonnenland, and ended one of our reconnaissances when brought face to face with an irritated young bull, which indicated in emphatic

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fashion that that road went no farther. We backed up hastily, were suddenly again in Egestorf, started out for the third time on the only good road which went in any direction; and I noticed a particularly spick-and-span cottage we had passed several times.

“No farmer would keep his house so spotless,” I said to Lühr. “This may be the place we want.”

It was.

I Sign a Pledge

Certain superlatives may at once be applied to Sonnenland-Gelände-Egestorf:

Its grounds are the most intensively developed of any I have ever visited;

Its cleanliness, indoors and out, is beyond belief;

Its percentage of children is the highest of any centre not operated exclusively for children;

And it boasts more rules, more rigid rules, and, from the viewpoint of an American or Englishman, more unnecessary rules than any other centre known to me.

The proprietor, Herr Hellmuth Beschke, is an ex-soldier. Though the same is true of nearly every man of his age in Germany, Herr Beschke has retained an unusual love for military habits of thought, for attention to detail, and for machine-like discipline.

He turned out to be a tall, serious man, with some superfluous weight. His dignity was great; and I never saw him smile.

He received us courteously. “You will stay a week?”

I SIGN A PLEDGE

No? A few days only? Very well. Here are our rules."

He handed us folders headed "*Beantwortung oft gestellter Fragen*" ("Reply to Frequently Asked Questions"), sheets containing six or seven thousand closely printed words each, and supplemented, we learned soon after, by additional sheets of printed rules, a dozen or more to a sheet, posted in every sleeping-room. Wherever we went, we encountered more of them.

"You will sign the *Verpflichtungsscheine* (the pledges)."

I reproduce the document in literal translation:

PLEDGE

The undersigned herewith declares that he takes no offence at the common naked bathing of the two sexes. The visit to Freilichtgelände 'Sonnenland' is in consequence of the conviction that bathing without any clothing whatever is of the greatest value in its healthful and moral aspects.

I understand the principles in force on the Gelände, and pledge myself to follow them conformably with the ground- and house-regulations, which are known to me. I have particularly taken cognizance of the agreement that no responsibility is assumed for injuries of any kind.

We signed.

"Herr Strange, room number four in the block-house; Herr Lühr, half of room number six: a double

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room." A *Diener* took our luggage. "If you will come this way, you may undress and visit the *Gelände* immediately."

We had found the way from Klingberg much longer than we had expected, had had no lunch, and were famished. We said so. Frau Beschke served us an excellent meal, in which meat figured the more pleasantly after our long abstinence from it.

I longed for a cigarette, but I thought it well to refer to the rules:

8: SMOKING AND THE USE OF LIQUOR.

The prohibition of smoking on the Gelände is self-comprehensible for everybody. Many, nevertheless, are unable to agree that confirmed smokers should do without their cigarettes in the house. The majority of the guests are convinced non-smokers or have become so in the interests of the movement. How provoking it would be for them if exceptions were permitted! Here the minority must give in. Whoever believes that he cannot give up smoking under any circumstances whatever should not, however, simply go out into the street, where house and Gelände regulations do not apply. Bad examples corrupt good morals. What a torture the sight of a smoker must be for an individual who has made a fixed resolution not to smoke in Egestorf!

To this all persons should particularly dedicate themselves, since the days of vacation should be

I SIGN A PLEDGE

applied to bodily rejuvenation. There may be a little struggle, but the suggestion is made that the bad habit can be given up. There are dozens of examples of guests who, as the result of a fourteen days' stay at "Sonnenland," have left as non-smokers. Various letters of thanks bear witness that they did not relapse at later dates. Therefore, you smokers, come to Egestorf!

Outside of the property we cannot set up prohibitions. But we do not expect house guests to go to the village for the express purpose of doing their "inevitable" smoking under all eyes. It is everybody's duty, in so far as he identifies himself with the movement, to represent it worthily in the outside world. Because Egestorf wishes to set an example it is most particularly subjected to the scrutiny and even to the criticism of persons who think otherwise in this connexion.

A single phrase dealt with the second question: "Words need not be wasted in discussing the use of alcohol."

"It's news to me," I commented, "that I cannot light a cigarette, even in the public highway, without torturing somebody. I am kind-hearted, and I don't like to torture people."

"What do you think of the argument?" asked Lühr.

"Yes and no," I said. "After all, what is nudism? Is it a saner mode of life, enjoyable in itself, or is it a

religion which I cannot embrace without swearing off all the little sins which make life so much happier? Is it something for all normal men and women, or is it a modern monasticism, reserved for ascetics? Is it a pleasure or is it a penance? I began it because I found it good for my health — that I admit frankly. But I have kept it up because I found it a joy. Did I come here to be happy, or did I come here to be reformed? Nudism is a cult. Why must it be coupled with other cults? Why cannot I be a nudist without being a vegetarian, a non-smoker, and a non-drinker as well? This is one of the few centres where vegetarianism isn't the rule. Good — though I know that the sight of meat is no 'torture' to those of my friends who refuse to eat it. But tobacco is so decidedly out of fashion here that we are expected to give it up not only on the grounds, but elsewhere as well. Why? I don't mind giving up smoking on the *Gelände*; but why, because I happen to be a nudist, shouldn't I smoke in the village? For every one person who condemns smoking there are a hundred who condemn nudism. Wouldn't it be more logical if I were to condemn both? ”

Lühr closed the cigarette-case which he had half-opened. “ Let's get undressed,” he said.

“ Any Clothing Whatever is Prohibited! ”

From the main cottage, an extremely modest building maintained in a state of spotless cleanliness, we headed for the blockhouse. At the side of the cottage

“ANY CLOTHING IS PROHIBITED!”

a solid board fence assured privacy. We passed a large sign:

“ENTERING UPON THE GELÄNDE WHILE WEARING ANY CLOTHING WHATEVER IS PROHIBITED.”

It marked a dead-line, as I discovered immediately. I had been assigned to room number four in the block-house, a long, narrow, wooden one-storey structure, all of whose rooms opened outward. I found my room and entered it.

Its furniture consisted of a cot, a bedside table, a wash-stand, a chair, and two sheets of printed rules posted on the wall. Opposite the door was a single window.

The *Diener* had placed my suit-case near the door. A chambermaid was at work making the bed. With pleasant blue eyes, bobbed reddish hair, and intelligent features, she was decidedly attractive. She was young — not over twenty-two or three — and her figure was lovely. All of this I took in at a glance, for she was quite naked. She was on the other side of the dead-line and she was obeying the rules.

She turned to me with a friendly smile. “*Guten Tag, mein Herr.* I will be through in a minute.”

I made the reply which would have been astonishingly improper anywhere except in the happily topsyturvy world in which we both lived. “It’s all right,” I said. “You needn’t hurry. I’m just going to get undressed.”

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I did so, while she fluttered about setting the room to rights, seeing to it that there were towels and a candle (for there was no electric light), and inquiring how many pillows I wished. She was totally unembarrassed; so was I.

The *Diener*, now nude, thrust his head in at the door to inquire if there was anything he could do. I answered him in the negative. The naked chambermaid was still busy. I left her to her tasks and walked out, as naked as she, into the sun.

Herr Beschke was waiting for me, and a minute later I was involved in doubles at ring-tennis.

Four excellent courts, with base-, service-, and centre-lines freshly marked with lime, lay side by side on a level ground which had been cut out of a clayey slope. All four nets were stretched at exactly the same height. Wooden boxes, with lids, were sunk symmetrically into the bank at one side, and held an ample supply of the rings used in the game.

"The rules?" I inquired.

"Exactly the same as at lawn-tennis," said Herr Beschke, "except that all throws must be side-hand, and only one hand may be used. Shall we begin?"

We played, an athletic girl and Lühr, a magnificently muscled athlete, against Herr Beschke and myself, and the difference between ring-tennis *à la* Klingberg and the same game *à la* Egestorf was most marked. At Klingberg, where the court was long and where there were no lines whatever, Lühr was an ex-

“ANY CLOTHING IS PROHIBITED!”

pert, for he could hurl the ring with terrific force. He did so in the lined court at Egestorf, and his service was far out.

“Love-fifteen,” said Herr Beschke calmly.

Lühr tried to adjust himself to the altered game. He found it impossible. Exactly as in lawn-tennis, the opponents rushed for the net position. Lühr tried it, and Herr Beschke’s perfect lob — possibly the first Lühr had ever seen — sailed over his head. He tried staying back, and the military man’s tosses came across at acute angles to drop within inches of the net for placements. He tried playing from the service-line, and Herr Beschke immediately demonstrated that the position was as unsound as it is at tennis, for he intercepted the tosses at the net to score on wily shots to the side-lines. Lühr began to throw harder — the thunderbolts which had sprained so many fingers at Klingberg — and his opponents stepped aside to let the ring fly out.

I have played a great deal of lawn-tennis, and liked the Egestorf variety of the nudist game. There was no danger of damaged fingers, for we did not attempt to catch Lühr’s terrific throws. The rallies were longer and more interesting; it was necessary to follow service to the net or risk an acing return; and an element of brains was introduced into a game which had been chiefly one of brawn.

At the end of the first set Lühr’s partner and I changed places, and we did somewhat better. Herr

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Beschke and I had won the first set to love. Lühr and I took four games before our more skilful opponents went out.

"I don't like this game," Lühr whispered to me; "too many rules."

I liked it enormously; the rules improved it, and I had never perspired so freely at Klingberg.

"Swimming?" suggested Herr Beschke.

Through a charming miniature forest, traversed by exquisitely kept paths, we reached a home-made pool surrounded by trees. The whole affair could not have been much over fifty feet long, and it was nowhere deeper than six or seven feet, but one end actually boasted a made-to-order sandy beach.

I swam until I was tired. I noticed the multiplicity of signs: "Depth, 1 Meter," "Depth, 1.50 Meters," "Non-Swimmers Must Not Pass This Point," "Depth, 2 Meters." I noticed a number of children and began to understand the reason for the precautions.

We were left alone and wandered to a large exercise ground. A string crossed it at a height of ten feet. On either side were players armed with tambourine-like drums. They batted a rubber ball back and forth over the string.

"*Komisch!*" said Lühr.

"Excellent," I said. The dimensions of the huge court called for a prodigious amount of running and made possible the use of teams of four and more on a side; the high string lengthened the rallies by minimizing the effect of skill with the drum alone.

A CHILDREN'S PARADISE

I have not seen the game played elsewhere. It should be.

A moderately heavy ball of basketball size made its appearance. The drums were put away, and exactly the same game continued with the ball hurled and not struck: less exercise for the legs, but far more for the arms.

It began to drizzle.

Most of the others were white-skinned novices. They rushed for shelter.

Lühr and I, bronzed from head to foot and accustomed to any weather, tossed the heaviest ball we could find back and forth. He threw with savage force. His splendid body, dripping with water, might have served as a model for any sculptor. He flung the ball harder and harder until it became so slippery that we were compelled to stop.

But his throws had been terrific. I believe they gave the man of brawn an outlet for his outraged feelings.

A Children's Paradise

A man of sixty-odd spoke to me. "I'm an American," he said abruptly. He was obviously a German-American. "I'm an American musician. In your opinion, who is the greatest of living musicians?"

He was short, stoutish, greyish, and his look was wild.

"Well, who would you say?" I countered.

"Richard Strauss!" he said emphatically. "Do you agree?"

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I agreed. . . . I had rather expected him to mention his own name.

"I like nudism," he continued, "but I find it hard to give up smoking. Of course Richard Strauss is the greatest of living musicians."

Herr Beschke passed. I nodded to him.

A young Scot spoke to me. "My first day at this sort of thing," he confessed.

"Like it?"

"Very much — but — I say, aren't one or two of the people here rather peculiar?"

A German girl spoke to me. "Are you travelling all over Europe in that big car? Are you travelling alone? Tst! Tst! Are you going to Berlin? It is a wonderful city, Berlin! Such beautiful monuments! Such splendid palaces!"

I said that I had recently been there. I refrained from stating that I thought the palaces and the monuments excruciatingly hideous. Tastes differ.

Herr Beschke passed again. . . .

I spoke to the gymnastic teacher, a dark-haired young woman. I complimented her on her beautiful coat of tan. Though such a remark is usually a shortcut to the friendship of any nudist, she replied without cordiality. It had leaked out that I had brought with me the gymnastic teacher of a rival centre, and she could not fathom my motives. In my simplicity I had thought that she and Lühr would have much in common. Instead she avoided him rather pointedly.

The rain stopped. I walked slowly toward the build-

A CHILDREN'S PARADISE

ings. On the other side of the dead-line the pretty chambermaid was working at a laundry tub. She had slipped on a skirt and nothing else. A man was pumping water for her.

I wandered toward the right. I encountered Herr Beschke once more. He was everywhere.

"The dormitories," he said. "Would you like to see them?"

A long shack, one storey in height, with windows open to the south — like a poultry-house — greeted us. Within were straw pallets, many of them, a yard apart — and quantities of children. There was plenty of ventilation, I observed — and once again the same incredible cleanliness.

"Pauper children," said Herr Beschke to me, as we walked out again. "They are sent here for a week or two at a time by philanthropic people. Herr Robert Laurer" (publisher of *Lachendes Leben*, the most important German nudist periodical) "stops in frequently to see how they are getting along. I make a very low rate for them — barely what they cost me."

I could see naked children scampering about on a playground of their own, and I felt that in caring for them Sonnenland more than justified its existence.

The happiness of children in a state of nakedness is incredible. There are no clothes to be dirtied and no reproofs to be feared. Every mud-puddle is a place for unutterable delights, and every pool a haven where the damage may be mended. What heavenly games become possible when there is no danger of ripping dresses and

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stockings! What simple pleasures come from the intimate contact with the earth, which children love so dearly, when their only garment is durable, washable epidermis! I am never tired of watching naked children at play: life can offer few greater joys than are theirs.

I had seen similar children in German tenements, filthy, ratlike, pale. I saw them now with colour in their cheeks, tan on their bodies, and, possibly more important than either, exuberant happiness in their hearts. A week ago, and they had swarmed in back streets, and had been furtive, repressed, cowed. Here their stature was manlike. They had lost fear. They had become human. They were partaking of the goodness of living and would remember it for a long time to come. A week more, and they would go back to their tenements — but they would go fortified against disease and against discouragement.

“This is a great and worthy charity,” I said to Herr Beschke.

Rules, Rules, Rules!

We returned to the adult quarters.

I put on my training-suit.

We dined, perhaps two dozen of us, in the cottage, on simple, well-cooked food, including meat. I noticed that a number of the guests strolled into the road to smoke — in spite of the inhibitions contained in the printed matter.

It grew dark. There was no electric light. There was

RULES, RULES, RULES!

no running water. There were privies, immaculately clean, instead of modern toilets.

I could see naked children scampering to the pump for final ablutions before seeking their pallets. I found room number four in the blockhouse. I lighted my candle and read the only reading-matter I had at hand: the rules, and Herr Beschke's prolix commentary on them:

7: CLOTHING

a) ON THE GELÄNDE: *For a visit to the Gelände the question is paradoxical. There are nevertheless occasions when the basic demand of Freikörperkultur [a synonym for 'Nacktkultur'], "complete nakedness," cannot be punctiliously complied with: viz., after the bath, when a bathrobe may be used on account of the danger of catching cold; in chilly weather or when overheated after games, when training-suits must not be denied to susceptible persons; at the outset, when women may be permitted to wear bathing-suits.*

Except for the above cases it is fundamental that use of the Gelände be made only in a state of nakedness. The dressing-rooms which will be found near the house serve to take care of clothes. The shelter-cabin on the Gelände is not intended to be used as a wardrobe. To leave clothes strewn about on the Gelände is untidy and must be avoided. To enter upon the Gelände in so-called

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street attire is tactless. It must be as offensive to the other visitors as it would be if somebody entered a café unclothed.

True as a whole, if not in all of its parts, I ruminated; but why hand guests unnecessary dissertations of this kind?

b) IN THE HOUSE: *The question of clothing is more serious during a stay in the house. There are fanatics who, as a logical sequence, would demand nudity here as well.*

While compliance would not be possible in ordinary life, it goes without saying that nudity would be quite as suitable in the house as on the Gelände. On hygienic grounds, however, it must be dispensed with. One must think of the kitchen personnel, of new arrivals or departing guests, to whom the sight of a person in "Light-Dress" would be exactly as shocking as would be that of a visitor in street attire on the Gelände. — So what shall one wear? There is much sinning, especially by the men, on grounds of comfort and as a result of the frequent dressing for meals. To be half-dressed is ridiculous; and trousers with dangling suspenders, accompanied by porous- or sweat-shirts are tasteless. Clothing in the home should be light, airy, and comfortable, but it should be in good taste. Suggested for men: short black pants, open sport-shirt, sandals or gymnasium slippers.

RULES, RULES, RULES!

For chillier evenings sport-trousers such as knickerbockers, with woollen jerseys, or short trousers or Bavarian knee-pants and lumberjack coats. Practical, particularly for cooler days, are the so-called training-suits. They should, however, not be worn exclusively, precisely as pyjamas and bathrobes are not used for day wear. They answer at meal-times, but not at evening gatherings. Similarly complete street attire with starched collars is out of place in the house.

The ladies are better off in this respect. An airy dress may be slipped on quickly. Gaily coloured dresses of this kind are most attractive. No suggestions of any kind are necessary here.

What a vast quantity of windy argument! What bad logic, leading through curious twists to perfectly valid conclusions! Neither "the kitchen personnel," given to nudity and semi-nudity, as I myself had seen, nor departing guests, themselves naked five minutes earlier, would find "shocking" "the sight of a person in 'Light-Dress.'" Why not base a prohibition of indoor nudism on the more tenable ground that the main cottage, as at Klingberg, was visible from the public highway?

Clothing "in good taste"? Two men at the next table had appeared coatless, but not vestless, and by no process of reasoning could that be considered "good taste." How much simpler not to attempt to do all of the thinking for a group of adults, but to rely instead

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on their own good sense, so pleasantly evidenced at Klingberg!

The commentary meandered on: day's routine; social amenities; games and sports; nudity outside of the grounds (correctly disapproved); photography, which was banned in a fifteen-hundred word dissertation, with sub-dissertations on snapshots, "art" photographs, the possible embarrassments to the subjects, and the dangers involved in allowing a commercial establishment to develop a roll of film. In general the conclusions were correct; but the argumentation was superfluous and fallacious.

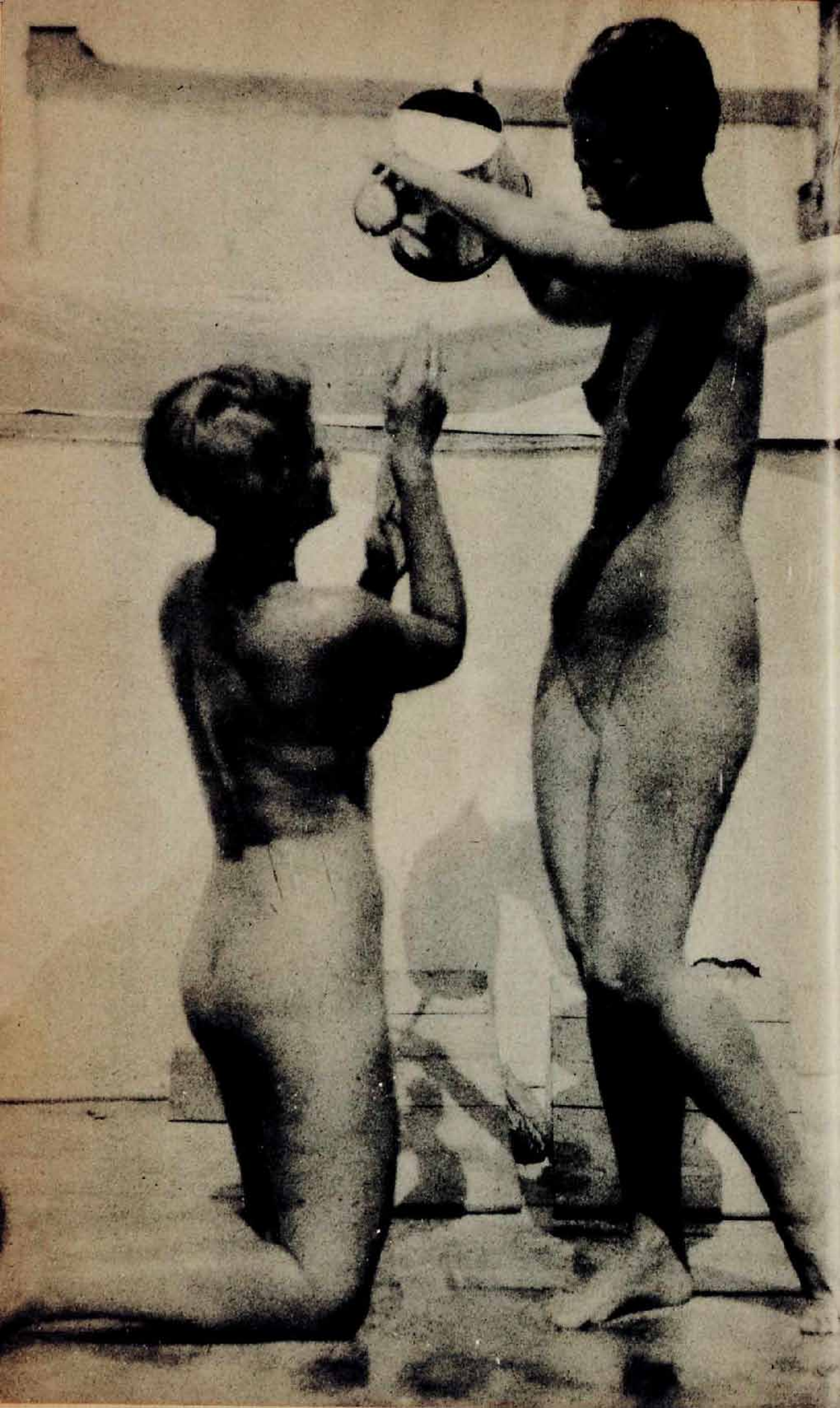
Was it possible that our well-meaning German friends could not arrive at correct conclusions unless led there through mazes of flawed argument? I thought back, and in that moment I began, for the first time in my life, to understand the roots of one of the profoundest psychological differences between Teuton and Anglo-Saxon.

Hellmuth Beschke

Up early in the morning. Calisthenics led by the black-haired young woman. Some dozens of children; a smaller number of adults — perhaps fifty or sixty persons in all — and the unholy system of Rudolf von Laban.

When the familiar movements began, I stepped quietly to the rear. From nowhere Herr Beschke joined me. He was everywhere, always. I should not be sur-





prised to learn that he materialized at a dozen other places at the same moment.

"*Guten Morgen, Herr Strange.*"

"*Guten Morgen, Herr Beschke.* I slept well, but I'm too lazy to exercise." It was as good an excuse as any other.

He nodded, and we stood together, separated from the gymnasts by a wire fence.

Lühr excelled. One or two of the others were almost as graceful. The von Laban system is good to watch when the participants are young and expert and have good figures. But when the black-haired young woman, instead of allowing the gymnasts to perform the most difficult evolutions together, lined them up and required them to perpetrate solos, one after another, I pitied the older performers. The elderly German-American pranced toward us, waving his arms and leaping in unconscious burlesque of the movements which the teacher had demonstrated so artistically.

"Yes," I murmured, "I didn't join in the exercises because I am lazy — and I shall remain lazy until they are over."

Herr Beschke turned to me suddenly. "Herr Strange, why is it that so many Americans and English go to Klingberg, and so few come here?"

It was a direct question, and I could not commit the tactlessness of giving him too direct an answer.

We had turned. We were walking slowly toward the house. I could see men at work tidying the already tidy paths. I saw, as if it were spread open before me, the

interior of Herr Beschke's tidy mind. It was ready to wrestle with everything. It worked hard. It loved detail. It was too, too willing to do the thinking that should have been done by others. It was too, too fond of casting into hard and fast rules conclusions which would have been arrived at by the taste and decency of the guests.

"Some guests must be controlled by rules." I could imagine him saying that, and if I replied: "I should not accept such guests at all," he would fail to follow, for we should be on the delicate ground where Teuton and Anglo-Saxon do not see alike.

"You are over-institutionalizing," I might say. "You are trying to deal with too many contingencies. Forget them; most of them will never arise. Don't be so serious. Don't make nudism a religion. It is a thing of joy. Try to get some of that joy into your own system! Let it overflow, so that it may spread among your guests! You have accomplished miracles with your grounds. They aren't human, and they don't mind being laid out in mathematical areas. But Anglo-Saxons *do* mind. Give them hints, not commands. Let them feel free, even if they aren't. The Germans for whom you write your printed sheets may dedicate their vacations to serious *Wiederholung* — rejuvenation — bodily refreshment — at the sacrifice of everything else. My people want joy first of all. Give them that, and they will take whatever else goes with it. The more you humour the Anglo-Saxons by giving them the freedom they demand, the less likely they will be to abuse it."

HELLMUTH BESCHKE

These things I might have said, and did not. I was talking to a grown man whose mind had frozen into Teutonic rigidity. I chose less debatable ground. "Herr Beschke," I said, "you have no electric lights."

He said something about the great expense of installing transmission lines.

"You haven't modern plumbing. You don't offer the comforts of Klingberg." I was ashamed of myself for dodging the issue, but I knew that it would not help to face it. "Among Germans Egestorf is popular. I can understand why. Other centres might well imitate what you have done with your grounds. Your efficiency is enormous — and German. So far as the children are concerned, you are doing a fine, philanthropic work. Another generation will thank you. I wish you all possible success."

"The English and the Americans?"

"They will come some day — when you are ready to give them what they want. They are queer people. . . ."

I left in the afternoon. The bus to the main railroad line ran only twice a week. I took Lühr to Lüneburg, twenty miles away, so that he might catch an express, and dropped him. He would reach Klingberg late at night.

I turned and for a long period forgot nudism to wander through the loveliness of Celle, of Hannover, of Düsseldorf, and along the shores of the legend-haunted Rhine.

THE ELUSIVE SWISS



“ *What Kind of Game is ‘ Camille ’ ?* ”

SPEAKING generally, the north-western urban half of Switzerland is Protestant, and the south-eastern rural half Catholic. Speaking generally, the *Nacktkultur* movement has made some little headway in the Protestant cantons, and none whatever in those which are Catholic. The *Gelände* are to be found near Schaffhausen, Zürich, Basel, Berne, Biel, Interlaken, and Geneva, all in the north-western section, and all, except for the sixth, important cities.

The Swiss population bears more than one resemblance to that of the United States. It is highly heterogeneous. Its north-westerners, industrialized and progressive, have warred in the past with the south-easterners, given to farming and culturally static. Its citizens speak four entirely different languages: good French, fair Italian, bad German, and Romansh, the latter no dialect, but a Rhæto-Romance idiom derived directly from Latin. Its educated people are conversant with two or three of the native tongues, and English in addition; its peasants speak the language of their

“WHAT KIND OF GAME IS ‘CAMILLE’?”

cantons and understand no other. Finally there are federal and cantonal laws, federal and cantonal jurisdictions; and, as might be expected of the nation whose fame is identified with that of John Calvin, there is an aggressive Puritanical element given to prying earnestly into the affairs of its neighbours. The result is that nudism has been fought from the beginning and has won a quasi-legal standing through a series of judicial decisions.

Its status, however, is still perilous. The Canton of Berne has officially pronounced in its favour. “No criminality is to be found in such nude gatherings of adults,” states the decision. “They are by no means public, and they take place on private grounds. Whether or not children are to participate is clearly the business of the parents.” But the Canton of Zürich has not yet acted, with the result that the group in that city does not dare advertise the location of its *Gelände*. Sympathizers are invited to address their correspondence to a post-office box, and my letter so directed elicited a reply asking me to prove membership in at least two different foreign organizations before expecting to meet the adherents. The Genevese nudists have a meeting-place. Like that of the Zürich group, its location is secret, and the names of the members are known only to one another. The Schweizer Licht-Bund is doubtless right in advising local groups not to admit persons who, for one reason or another, cannot immediately be enrolled as members of the national body. “New group members,” states the instruction sheet,

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"must take out memberships in the S. L. B. without the least delay, so that the national association may be in a position to provide legal assistance in case of need." The unusually searching questionnaire which applicants are required to fill out ends with an odd question: "Which of the following grounds justifies your admission: that you are (a) a reformer of living-conditions? (b) a devotee of sports? (c) the possessor of a particularly well-built body? (d) a person with a public following?" Though the juxtaposition of categories is strange, the groups are advised to refuse admittance to candidates who do not qualify in one or more of them. Among the Swiss nudists there is no place for the merely curious.

Basel, externally at least, is charmingly European. The frescoes decorating its four-hundred-year-old *Rathaus* look out into the ancient market-place — and probably close their eyes when anachronistic trolley-cars clatter by. Even its street names smack of mediævalism: "Barefoot Street" and "Barefoot Place," "The Street of Knights," "The Street of Peace," "The Street of the Little Tree," "The Street of the Pilgrims," "The Street of the Stone Suburbs." But the moral viewpoint of Basel is no more enlightened than that of a New England village.

I invited the only young woman I knew in Basel to dinner and the theatre.

She was horrified. "Oh, I couldn't think of coming!" she twittered over the telephone. "Everybody knows me and nobody knows you. Everybody would know I

“WHAT KIND OF GAME IS ‘CAMILLE’?”
was dining with a stranger. If we were seen together
after dark, I’d lose my reputation!”

“When can we meet?”

“You may call, if you wish; or we could go for a
drive in the afternoon.”

I did both, and as the heat was fearful, she suggested
a visit to the splendid Eglise-Bad — where a large
pool is set aside for the use of ladies who object to
swimming in the same water as gentlemen. She conde-
scended to visit the main pool with me, after which we
sat on the grass while she told me pertinent facts about
the Puritanism of the citizens.

“Only a little while ago the director of one of the
most important theatres was forced to resign and leave
Basel. It became public that he was having a — Well,
what shall I say?”

“Liaison” was too strong a word for her. “You
mean,” I said delicately, “it became public that he was
not a pure man?”

She blushed. “Yes.”

“And he had to resign?”

“Naturally — and he was such a clever director.”

I sighed. “Do they play *Camille* in this town?”

“*Camille? Camille?*”

“Yes, *Camille.*”

She shook her head. “I have never heard of playing
Camille. What kind of game is that?”

“*We Hold a Marvellous Gelände*”

At Klingberg my friend the Swiss dentist had given me the name of his friend the president of the Bund für freie Lebensgestaltung of Basel. The Swiss dentist, I add parenthetically, had not experimented with nudism at home. Instead of trying that perilous venture he had travelled some hundreds of miles to look into it elsewhere. . . .

I sought the president in a city remarkable for its uphill streets, often ending in blind alleys, and its downhill streets, running to the Rhine.

He had moved, and at his late residence nobody could inform me of his new address. Doubtless the post-office would forward letters; but quite possibly the post-office might think twice before confiding his address to an utter stranger.

My stay in Basel was to be limited to a few days. I visited the office of the electric-light company. Possibly the president ran up monthly bills.

“*Jawohl*, Herr Z— has moved. We understand he is moving into an apartment in one of the new buildings on the Schanzengasse, but we don't know yet which building. There are several new apartments. . . .”

I found the Schanzengasse. I wandered down one side of it, inspecting cards over bell-pushes. I returned along the other side. Inevitably Herr Z—'s card was in the last slot of the last apartment house.

I rang. Nothing happened. I rang again. A long, deep, Swiss silence. I sought the janitress.

“WE HOLD A MARVELLOUS GELÄNDE”

“Yes, Herr Z— has taken an apartment here, but he is out. When will he be in? I don't know. This afternoon? It is hard to say. At supper? Perhaps; perhaps not.”

“I take it he returns here to sleep.”

“No,” she said calmly. “He engaged this apartment and left on his annual vacation. He hasn't moved in yet.”

It occurred to me that the president of the *Bund* would probably go to the *Gelände* for his vacation, and I dropped a line to the Schanzengasse address in the hope that it would be forwarded.

A reply came in twenty-four hours, and in English:

“Near Basel, in Germany, we hold a marvellous Gelände, and we would be pleased to receive you as a member if you are staying in Basel. Including we are remitting our ‘Statuten’ as well as our ‘Aufnahmegesuch’ which you kindly might fill out. The entrance fee is s.fr.5. — and the annual quotation is s.fr.10.”

I was anxious to visit the *Gelände*, but I was not anxious to return to Germany. Soon after leaving Baden-Baden, and while threading a narrow road through the Schwarzwald, I had had a meeting with a little Renault. Its owner, who had just bought it, was trying to discover whether or not it would do a hundred kilometres an hour. It would, and it did; but it swerved while passing me and brushed one of my rear fenders.

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It was his misfortune that his car weighed half what mine did. Mine sustained no damage worth mentioning; his dived down a bank, careened across a field for two hundred yards before he could bring it to a halt, and then halted for what would probably be a long, long time.

The owner ran back. I had stopped. He was in a bad humour. "If you hadn't been there, there wouldn't have been an accident!" he declared.

"That is exactly true," I admitted. "Did anybody get hurt?" He had missed a telegraph pole by inches, and through some miracle his car had not turned over.

"No — and there were five people in the car."

"You should be overcome with gratitude — not with anger."

He looked at me doubtfully. "I think I ought to have you arrested. You're not a German. Where do you live?"

I handed him my card.

"Paris? If you leave Germany, I can't have you arrested. Who is going to pay for the damage to my car?"

"That," I said gently, "is something you should have asked yourself before you ran it at a hundred kilometres an hour."

A friend who accompanied him cut in indignantly. "He wasn't doing a hundred kilometres. He was doing only ninety."

"Have it your own way. Ninety kilometres — fifty-five miles an hour — on a narrow, bumpy road — on

“WE HOLD A MARVELLOUS GELÄNDE”

a Sunday — with traffic heavy: God was watching out for you.” I walked to his car and satisfied myself that its occupants were uninjured.

The owner followed me. “I think I ought to have you arrested. You’re not a German.”

“I am at your disposal.”

“Do you carry liability insurance?”

“Naturally.”

We compared our papers, and he brightened up.

“But I ought to have you arrested. . . .”

I had noted his name and address. “You are not a German yourself. You are an inhabitant of the ‘*Saar-Gebiet*.’ You are a nice chap, and I rather look forward to having you in the next cell.”

“You wouldn’t have *me* arrested?” he asked incredulously.

“Both of us or neither!”

“I — I’ll think it over,” he said, and while he was doing that, I crossed the Swiss frontier. He had no claim whatever, but the insurance company might give him that information in a tactless manner, and he might change his mind once more. In that event my innocence might not save me from being clapped into the nearest jail, and it did not seem to me that the privilege of partaking in Swiss nudism on German soil was worth the risk it involved.

I replied courteously but regretfully to the president. I started for Berne.

Bielersee — Lac de Bienne

The office of the Schweizer Licht-Bund is on the ground floor of a building on one of the busiest corners in Berne, and since the law has spoken in its favour, it does not hesitate to fill its show-window with nude photographs. I seriously question the good taste of the display, and still more do I question the merits of the large mail-order business in such photographs built up by the official periodical, *Die neue Zeit*. The average nudist is legitimately interested in illustrations of nudist activities, as found in magazines and books. He is unlikely, however, to decorate his house with sensational photographs. Even a cursory investigation of the sources from which mail-orders for such prints come has convinced me that the majority of the buyers have not practised nudism and have no desire to do so. They are stay-at-home "voyeurs," and their steady demand for magnifying-glasses, catered to by less reputable concerns in Germany, speaks for itself. But the Swiss nudists have suffered much from persecution, and the violence of their reaction, while deplorable, is nevertheless comprehensible.

"Yes, we have *Gelände* at Mörigen on the Bielersee, and also at Interlaken. You are a member of foreign associations? You would like to visit our *Gelände*? By all means. Go to Mörigen. Ask for the *Gelände* of the Schweizer Licht-Bund. Anybody will tell you where they are."

I had planned to go directly to Caux, where a tennis





BIELERSEE—LAC DE BIENNE

tournament was to take place, but the invitation was tempting. There had been much cool and rainy weather during my stay at Klingberg. It was now mid August, the sun was merciless, and the streets were hot. "How far is it to Mörigen?" I inquired.

"You are driving, aren't you? Go to Biel — a short run. It's just a few minutes from there."

Mörigen, indicated only on large-scale maps, lies on the east bank of the Bielersee, which, in turn, is part of the chain of lakes of the valleys east of the Juras. The main highway from Biel to Neuveville to Neuchâtel clings to the opposite bank of the lake; Mörigen is well isolated.

I followed a country road from Biel to Nidau; to Sulz. The next hamlet, an inn and half a dozen farms, was Mörigen. I asked a peasant for directions. He stared at me blankly. I repeated my question in my best German. He smiled idiotically and shrugged his shoulders.

A suspicion entered my mind. Biel is a linguistic frontier: its northern half is "Biel" and is German; its southern half is "Bienne" and is French. I tried him in the latter language. The idiocy vanished, and he gave me explicit directions.

On the shore of the Bielersee — the Lac de Bienne — was a little cottage inhabited by a man and a woman.

"The *Gelände* of the Schweizer Licht-Bund?"

"Adjoining immediately on the north. You may leave your car here."

"Thank you."

Two young men had been swimming in the lake — in bathing-suits. One of them came up to me as he noticed the direction of my steps. "Pardon me, monsieur, is anybody else going to the *Gelände*?" Except for the last word, he spoke in French.

"Are you a member?"

"Oh, no, monsieur!"

"I haven't the faintest idea if anybody else is coming."

An ill-defined path crossed rivulets. It led to a fence — a field — a tiny shack, open on one side: the property of the Schweizer Licht-Bund. Not a soul was about, though I shouted.

In my pocket was a copy of the official periodical. Sandwiched between an amusing, and partly untrue article entitled "*Le Nudisme en Amérique*," and an account of new struggles with the censor under the heading "*Aufführung unserer Filme*," I found a page devoted to the *Bielersee-Gelände*. Eighteen enthusiasts, including a photographer, had practised nudism on a recent Sunday. The Swiss laws protected them — but gave any passer-by who happened to see them the right to have them locked up. Therefore they had been nude on the field, fractionally clad as they entered the water, and nude again the moment a screen of reeds made them invisible from the shore. It sounded messy — and it explained the young men I had encountered. They were waiting for the show to begin.

The day was scorching. I bathed — in a bathing-suit, as suitable for a foreigner who sympathized with Swiss

I MEET A BILLION FLIES

nudists, but who did not propose to become a burnt offering for them. I swam out into the lake, whose margins were shallow, but whose waters were delightfully cool. I noticed that the bathers to the south stared incessantly in my direction. I dressed. I retraced my route.

“Excuse me, monsieur, are any other members going to the *Gelände* today?”

It was the other young man, and an inspiration came to my aid. “A party of twenty-seven beautiful girls is coming later —”

“Indeed, monsieur?”

“But I couldn't wait for them. *Au revoir, mon ami.*”

I saw him hurry to his companion to share the thrilling news. They began their long wait.

I hope they are still waiting.

I Meet a Billion Flies

A week later, and I was at Interlaken. As far away as Vienna I had heard that the nudist centre on Lake Brienz formerly owned by Werner Zimmermann (no relation to the proprietor of Klingberg) was charming. I sought it. I found it.

From the end of the highway I walked steeply downhill along the lake. I paced it: half a mile of rugged foot-path, and the sun was broiling.

The gate was marked. Eight or ten men and women in bathing-suits were at lunch in an excessively unpretentious cottage.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

"Yes, these are the *Gelände*," said a pretty girl in a white bathing-suit, who spoke no language other than the execrable "*Switzerdutch*." "We don't try nudism near the cottage; people on the other shore or on the steamers might see us. But we have an enclosure at the water's edge where we can be naked, and we swim naked. You will come back later? Where are you staying? At the Beau Rivage? Then you won't come back!"

But I did. I was curious.

I was led through a long vegetable garden. "We wear clothes here; they might see us." We entered a stockade. "The *Gelände*!"

I gazed about. The steep bank assured privacy from the north. Palings five feet high shielded us from the lake. But the grounds enclosed between the two covered an area no greater than twenty by thirty feet, and athletics of no kind were possible.

Wooden arrangements with head-rests were strewn about. On them sunned the nudists. I joined them. More "*Switzerdutch*."

At its best, German is not a beautiful language. At its worst, it is "*Switzerdutch*." With a strange love for the hideous, the harsh consonants of the pure tongue become harsher still, the gutturals, instead of coming from the stomach, come from the entrails, and the r's roll like drumfire. "*Sie fahren rechts aus*" becomes "*Se fahrre rrrakts üis*." It is most unmelodious.

A few men. Four women. Three happy, naked children. And a billion of the slow-moving, soft-bodied

I MEET A BILLION FLIES

flies which swarm near certain waters in Switzerland and Germany. It is easy to catch and kill them, but they attack in such clouds that it does not help.

"Where do we go swimming?"

"Here. Step into the water and crouch down at once so that nobody can see you."

Slippery rocks under the water . . . no possibility of diving . . . instead a bent-knee progression toward the deeper water and the swift cold current.

Two women joined me; one of the children.

A steamer passed. We submerged to our necks.

We left the water in the same manner that we had entered it. The flies assailed us joyously.

I had considered the Greifenstein-Gelände, near Vienna, the ultimate in poverty; but they were pretentious compared with these.

"How much do I owe you?" I asked the pretty girl in charge.

"*Fünfzig Rrrappen.*" The equivalent of ten cents.

"Are you coming again tomorrow?"

"Perhaps."

But the next day, and during the days that followed, I swam in the great pool at the *Kurhaus*. The flies were equally bad, but there was room to stretch . . . and I had seen Swiss nudism and did not care for it.

HOMeward BOUND



Sparta Revisited

IT was September, and Paris was the same as ever. Fontenay-les-Saint-Pères was the same as ever. It slumbered on its quiet hillside as it had slumbered for a thousand years.

I rang at the gate of "Manoir Jan."

"Excuse me, m'sieu," said Jenny, "I don't understand French."

Jenny, too, was the same as ever. Then she recognized me. "Why, Mr. Strange, I'm so glad to see you! How are you, and where have you been, and are you going to stay with us long, and did you have a good time, and my, how brown you've got!"

I parked. There were many more cars than I had ever seen in the past.

De Mongeot wrung my hand. "In a little more than four months our membership has doubled," he told me.

"Splendid!" I said.

"The club is very active. We have had big crowds over the week-ends, and many of our members have spent their vacations here. We made up a party to visit

SPARTA REVISITED

the members of *Mieux Vivre*, in Brussels, last month. We have begun to make improvements here; but I shall not spoil your pleasure by telling you about them. You shall see for yourself."

I entered the *château*. There were many familiar faces — and more that were not familiar.

I shed my clothes, slipped on the training-suit I had bought at Lübeck, and hastened to the brook.

"*C'est Monsieur Strange!*"

"*Allo, Monsieur Strange!*"

My hands were shaken; my back was slapped; I was even kissed — in the French fashion, on both cheeks.

"'Ow arr you, Monsieur Strange?"

It was my friend, the "*dactylo*."

"Did you go to Loumède for your vacation, *mademoiselle*? How did you like it?"

"*Hélas*, I did not go to Loumède after all. I could not afford the fare. I spent my vacation here. I lay all day long in the grass, and a so nice Australian taught me English. Look at me: am I not brown?"

So she had not seen the Mediterranean, the blue Mediterranean, and had not realized her wish to swim in it! But it was not the time for tragedy. I looked at her pretty figure. "*Mademoiselle*," I said, "you are most charmingly brown, and I compliment you; and if you had gone to the Mediterranean, you might have had nothing but rain."

They were crowding around me, my old acquaintances. "The clearing we have made — see? Here — and here! But we will not have to bathe in the brook

much longer!" They led me to an excavation behind the old mill. An architect member had drawn plans. An engineer member had calculated the mathematics and had run the levels. The muscular had contributed labour, and the affluent had contributed cash. "We need money only for cement and the skilled workmen who will cast it. Everything else we can do ourselves!"

I stood on the brink of what would soon be a large open-air swimming-pool and watched. Exactly as in the days of the Pharaohs, brown-skinned men dug with picks and shovels, and wheeled barrows full of dirt out on a ramp. Girls helped — or tried to help. A steam-shovel would have done the trick in a week, but modern labour-saving devices were expensive, and labour — again as in Egyptian times — cost nothing at all. The members wanted exercise. They had it, swarming like ants in and about the excavation, which was now almost finished — and they added a permanent improvement to the property.

"Isn't it going to be a wonderful pool, monsieur? It is going to be big — you can see that for yourself — and we shall divert the water of the brook so that it flows through it. We have worked on it — all of us — and our names, and the names of those who gave money, are on a scroll of honour in the dining-hall. You must look at it later."

I promised — knowing what that would mean — and I sought the nudarium.

"Allo, Monsieur Strange!"

SPARTA REVISITED

“Monsieur Strange!”

Naked forms gathered around me. Again the handshaking, again the cordial welcome.

Still more friends came up to greet me: Raymond Pallier, the artist; Gicquel, the gymnastic instructor; the little Dutch girl — I was glad to see her; Louise C—, who had been trying to reduce, but had gained instead; other men and women whose faces I remembered, but whose names were lost among the thousand new ones that had been added to my list of acquaintances during the summer.

It was a triumphant return.

“You have been at Klingberg, Monsieur Strange?”

“How do you know that?”

“Pierre saw you there, and he told us.”

“The rules have been changed. Nudism is now permitted as far as the brook.”

I was delighted. The semi-nudists belonged elsewhere.

“*La pelouse* — the lawn — is much better. Don't you think so?”

It *was* better. The padding of naked feet had evened it more gently than a steam-roller.

“Ring-tennis?”

“You must play! We have improved the courts also!”

I slipped out of my training-suit. I was naked among my friends, who admired my even bronze. Like great children, they had celebrated my return not by talk, but

by inviting me to join in their game. Yet why not? The sun was high, and later there would be time for talk.

I played.

The Fraternity of the Nude

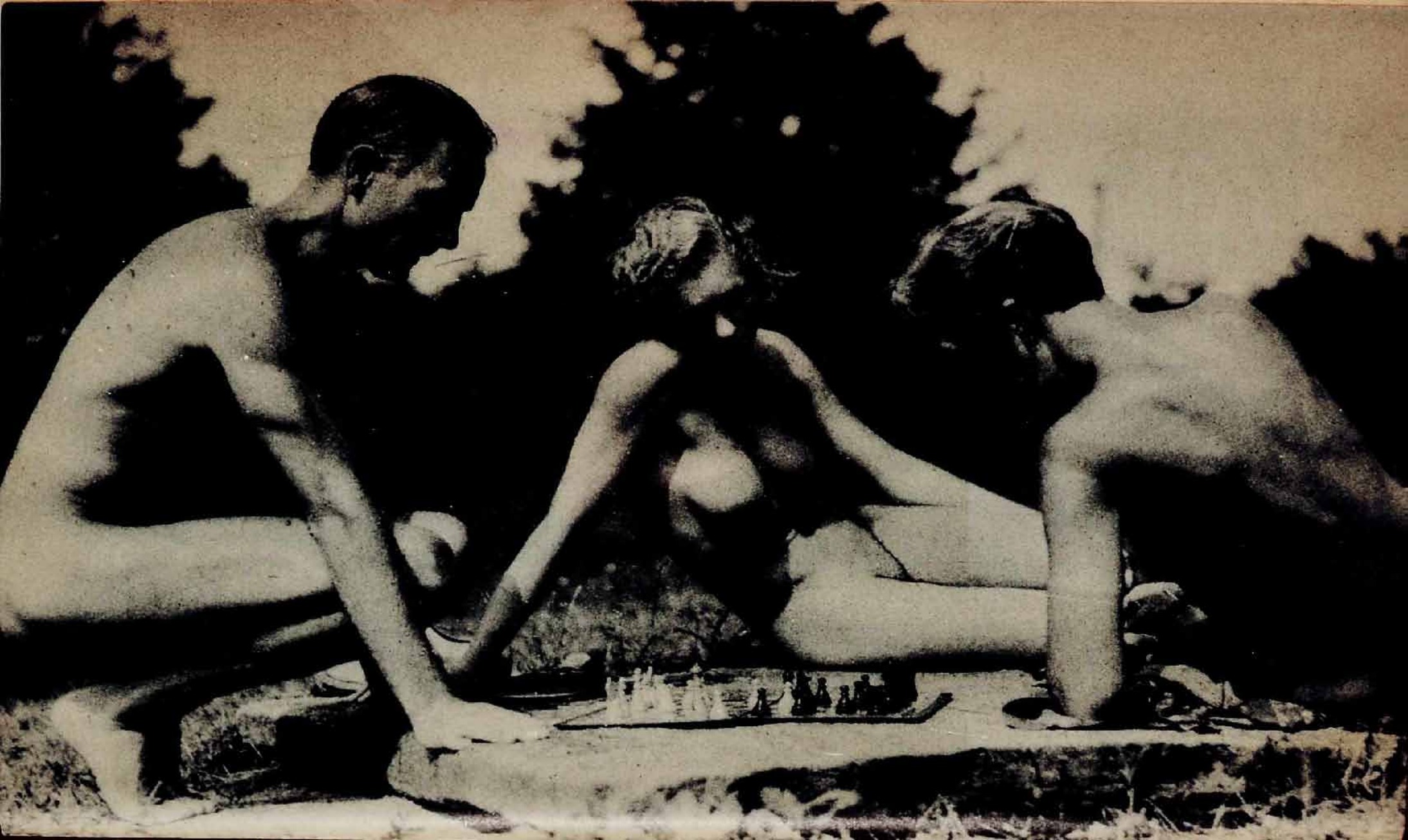
A new thought came to me as I dressed that evening. I had played — no worse and no better than four months earlier, better than some, worse than others. But nobody minded that.

At the tennis club of which I was a member in America, a strong player never under any circumstances condescended to play with a weak one. Players of nearly equal strength sought their own levels, and the tiros knew better than to ask the ranking men to waste time on them.

Among the nudists, however, everything was different. Nudism brought with it peculiar tolerances. Three strong players did not hesitate to accept a weak one as a fourth. Three weak players thought nothing of asking a strong one to round out a quartet. I wondered why it was so, and if the sight of the weaknesses of the flesh, so pitilessly exposed, did not bring with it a gentler, humaner outlook on life.

We Americans stand justly convicted of playing to win and only to win. Among the nudists there are larger and more worth-while considerations. Europe overflows with the wreckage of the War. I remembered the many mutilated men I had met at the centres, the one-legged, the one-armed, the lame, the partially blind.





THE FRATERNITY OF THE NUDE

They were never left out of games — and with that gentleness toward them came other gentlenesses toward others. I remembered Herr Beschke, at Egestorf, playing with the utmost seriousness against a nine-year-old child. I remembered so many instances, and Sparta was not exceptional. I had watched a fine swimmer at the brook patiently teaching a man with a paralysed leg to master the stroke that would be easiest for him. It could not have been fun for the teacher — yet no rule anywhere, among the many I had encountered, commanded kindness to the weak. It came naturally instead, with their nakedness; and, enlarged, it spelled tolerance, fraternity, and mutual understanding toward all manners of men. *It is only the clad Americans who have reported anti-American sentiment among the French; I who went among them naked, never saw or felt the slightest evidence of it.*

I went downstairs. De Mongeot was waiting for me at the landing. "The latest issues of our magazine. I hope it followed you regularly on your trip."

It had followed me, but several of the bi-weekly issues had not caught up with me. I was glad to find a quiet corner and glance through them.

Cartoons by Pallier; one that I thought very funny. It represented a young woman in a bathing-suit accompanied by a naked man on the grounds of the Sparta Club. "For Heaven's sake, take off that bathing-suit," he was saying. "Do you want to make us conspicuous?"

News of allied organizations in Algiers, Reims,

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Clermont-Ferrand, Royan, Oran, Loumède, Nice, Tunis, Montpellier, Casablanca : several of them I read of for the first time.

A large number of articles on the medical and psychological sides of nudism, and in one of the June issues a reference to a remark of my own :

“An American, come to visit the centre of the Sparta Club, said to me: ‘It is extraordinary for a stranger to find himself in this atmosphere of physical and mental health in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris, a city notorious for the degenerate amusements it offers its guests.’”

I had said that, and I had meant it.

The dining-hall was filled with a happy, laughing throng of youngsters and oldsters. They vibrated health, and a remoter implication of my thought came to me. The frankness of nudism reached out in many directions. It revealed everything, strength and weakness, health and disease — and since it revealed shameful disease, too, its influence was mighty for the good. Clothes hide much that is foul; nakedness declares everything. My neighbour at the theatre may be rotting with syphilis, and I may never suspect it. In that case, however, I shall not meet him among the nudists, for he cannot stand their scrutiny. Nudism and social disease are irreconcilable.

But I was not left to my reflections. A large painting hung on the wall. “A grand lottery: six hundred

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chances; five francs a chance. The money goes toward the swimming-pool." I did my duty.

We dined. I chatted with a Baron and with a chauffeur. Here was a real democracy and a real challenge. In ordinary life the Baron and I would meet in a hundred places; the chauffeur and I would meet — never. Here we had all three laid aside the advantages and disadvantages that clothes, environment, and possessions might give us. We had met naked, and as equals. Whatever position any of us held — or failed to hold — was based on something profounder than the accident of social assets and social liabilities.

At one of the German clubs a philosophical acquaintance had remarked: "It is my theory that even naked one can distinguish the gentleman from his servant." Perhaps — perhaps not — but in that challenge, so often faced, I have found one of the principal attractions of nudism.

The club was humming with activity. Plans were in the air, and they were plans which would begin to be carried out almost as soon as they were conceived. I took refuge in a game of bridge. I played with Madame Renault, the head of a great French publishing house, and the French representative of a well-known American advertising agency. Madame and I won. She gathered our winnings and dropped them into a box. "For the swimming-pool."

Two weeks later I slept at Fontenay for the last time of the season. The next day I started for home.

Back to Morality

I was on board a five-day transatlantic liner. My vacation was over. Out of approximately five months on foreign soil I had spent less than forty days with the nudists, but felt amazingly well as the result. Now life had slipped back into the conventional routine. . . .

In the morning I dressed and breakfasted. I changed my clothes and played ring-tennis. I dressed a third time and had lunch. After lunch, a walk around the deck, a fourth shift into gymnasium togs, and six rounds with the boxing-gloves. A rapid change into appropriate costume, and a swim in the ship's pool — until the weather grew so rough that it became necessary to pump it dry. Back to my cabin; the steward had laid out my evening clothes. I encased myself in them and, after having dressed six times in the course of the day, was ready for the evening's diversions. I had returned to civilization. . . .

Five or six meals a day. I had got along splendidly on sketchier fare among my friends the unclad. Cocktails and highballs wherever I went; only a few days more, and they would become illegal — hence ten times as numerous. Money in the air and always in the air: the pools; the warnings against professional gamblers; the expensive shops on B deck; the *de luxe* suites, and who occupied them; "What are you smuggling in?" It had been different in Europe.

I never mentioned nudism — naturally not — but

to my immense surprise a lean, spectacled American brought up the subject.

"I was going to Cologne," he said, "and what do you think one of my friends said? He said: 'I'll give you a letter of introduction to the nudist club. You'll like it. I go there often.' Doesn't that beat the Dutch?"

"Did you go?"

He did not suspect that I was an initiate, for he replied with unnecessary vigour: "Certainly not! What do you take me for? D'ye know, the chap who wanted to give me that introduction goes there with his daughter! His eighteen-year-old daughter, mind you! They get undressed, and he lets her see him without a stitch on!" He looked around and lowered his voice. "I mean, he lets her see him stark naked! And he sees her stark naked, too! What do you think of that? Isn't it the limit?"

"Go on."

"There are other people like that there, he told me: mothers and sons; girls and their brothers; married couples. . . ."

"It's a pity you didn't pay them a visit."

"Say, are you kidding me?"

"You would have had some interesting experiences."

"I'll tell the world!" Then his eyes half-closed. "I don't like this ship much. Do you? Too swell; too much dressing up; too much hoity-toity." His eyes began to shine. "Last year I came back on the *Monomania*. Now, there's a real ship for you, the *Monomania*! I

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met two other fellows, and the three of us met three nice girls: regular sports; not stand-offish, if you know what I mean. We slept in our own cabins, we men, only the first night out. After that we started on a Cook's tour of the girls' cabins. Every night we switched around and tried a new combination. Oh, boy, *that* was a trip!"

I brought him back to the more interesting subject. "Why didn't you visit the nudists in Cologne?"

"That? Oh, that?" He blinked. "Well, if you must know, I've got a daughter of twenty myself, and I'm a moral man."

HOME



American Beginnings

NEW YORK, Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and points west and southwest: it sounds like the cry of the train-announcer, but it is only the beginning of a roll-call of American nudist clubs. There are at least thirty of them in New York City alone. They range from small, homogeneous groups of a few dozen persons, admitting members on a basis of personal congeniality, to large, heterogeneous organizations, including two hundred or more individuals, and bringing together, more or less successfully, representatives of clashing social strata.

The clubs have multiplied tenfold in a year; and yet nudism in America is much older than is commonly believed.

At a meeting of one of the highly heterogeneous groups I encountered a member who was well over fifty. "I was one of the first of American nudists," he said. "My father came from a little town near Danzig. He emigrated to America. He settled down in a village near Tyrone, Pennsylvania. My two sisters, my brother,

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and I were brought up as nudists. My father and my mother had practised nudism at home. They saw no reason for giving it up here."

He spoke with only the least trace of a German accent.

"Friends used to visit us and practise nudism with us — some dozens of them. Naturally, they were all Germans. We had a farm in an isolated section, and we could do what we pleased."

"How long ago was this?" I asked.

"Thirty years and more," he answered.

The club to which he now belongs is four years old. It commenced functioning in December, 1929, when three German-Americans gathered a few friends of both sexes and hired a tiny gymnasium in New York City for weekly meetings.

The club grew rapidly. The purchase of a farm in New Jersey followed. The publication of the Merrills' first book gave the movement great impetus, and the percentage of German-Americans decreased as persons of other extractions joined the organization. In less than three years three hundred and seven men and women became members, and more than two hundred of them remained active.

The conflict with the police — inevitable in the land of Puritanism — came when a busybody New Jersey neighbour disregarded plentiful "Strictly Private" signs and dropped in to pay an informal call. What she saw led her to return with four constables with drawn revolvers.

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The immediate result was fines; the ultimate result was anticlimax. A painstaking investigation by authorities who were un-American in their open-mindedness came to a conclusion when the sheriff offered to deputize one of the nudists, so that future trespassers might be dealt with summarily.

A similar adventure occurred at their New York City gymnasium, when the police, said to have been egged on by an expelled member, haled two van-loads of nudists to Jefferson Market Court and charged them with indecent exposure. Acquittal followed, the Court holding that the exposure, while unquestionably "wilful," had been in no sense "lewd" — but the more sensational press had discovered material for startling headlines.

To these episodes, whose net result was the acquisition of semi-legal status for nudism in two American states, may also be traced the amusing article to which I have previously referred, contributed by the French journalist Salardenne to the bi-lingual Swiss nudist periodical *Die neue Zeit*. While sometimes untrue, his tales are too entertaining to be suppressed, particularly as they perfectly illustrate the type of American news-story with which the European public is regaled by writers whose imaginations are unrestrained by conscientious scruples.

I translate from the French:

"America is the country of records, and the Yankee nudists would not be real Yankees if they had not beaten the world's record for nudist scandals. Germany has had its nudist scandal:

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the prosecution of Professor Adolf Koch at Berlin; Switzerland has had its: the prosecution of the periodical *Die neue Zeit* at Berne; France, too, has had its: the prosecution of the nudists of Toulon. But these scandals were not particularly important and did not upset public opinion. It remained for the Americans to give us a super-scandal, something huge, unheard of, colossal, phenomenal — in a word, something American.

“ This is how it happened, and it took place at San Francisco, if some of the newspapers of the transatlantic press are to be given credence.”

The writer, it will be noted, has a poor idea of geography. He finds it difficult to reconcile tales about a single organization which operates both in New York and in New Jersey. Therefore he changes its address to California, which, like most of his countrymen, he believes is only a few minutes from Broadway.

“ A score of the inhabitants of the city, intrigued by the doctrines of nudism, had started a club. They met on lands in the suburbs about twenty-five miles from San Francisco. There, under the warmth of the California sun, the members, naked men and women, took their ease in the open air with pleasure and satisfaction.

“ Despite the precautions they had taken, and despite the extreme discretion of the members of the association, the thing came to the ears of the police, and as the gangsters were not keeping them busy at the moment, they decided to strike a telling blow.

“ ‘ We’ll take them in the act! ’ said the Chief.

“ A busload of officers, followed by a closed van, started at top speed in the direction of the nudist property. An hour later both cars stopped at its entrance. The police, revolvers in their hands, charged into the grounds as if they were attacking outlaws. The unfortunate nudists, who were inoffensively playing

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with a balloon, were surrounded in the twinkling of an eye and were arrested on the spot. Stark naked, they were piled into the closed van, while the police gathered up the clothes strewn about the grass, made bundles of them, and placed them on the roof of the vehicle.

“ Officers and prisoners thereupon started for San Francisco, the intention of the police being to take the culprits into court at once, their unclad condition being the best of all possible evidence against them.

“ But upon their arrival in the city an accident occurred. As the result of a misunderstanding in a crowded street, the van containing the nudists climbed the sidewalk, ran into a lamp-post and caught fire.

“ The unhappy occupants of the vehicle would have been burned alive had not a policeman hastened to open the door for them. Screaming with terror, they burst out of the burning van and began to run in every direction.

“ Imagine the dimensions of the scandal! Imagine naked men and women running wholly unclad through the streets of San Francisco, through throngs of gaping yokels!

“ The police succeeded in catching them again and hustled them into the nearest station-house, where they hastened to give them their clothes, which, by some miracle, had escaped the fire. After that they were led before a Judge, who punished them severely.”

Roger Salardenne, the author of the tale, is a prolific writer on European nudism. “ I don't know if the story is quite true,” he comments, with praiseworthy caution — after having related it as true — “ but I shall tell you another for whose veracity I can vouch :

“ A group of New York nudists was brought into court on a charge of outraging public decency. They were all sentenced to three months' imprisonment. After imposing sentence the Judge

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who had just found them guilty took the president of the club aside and said to him: ' You are making a mistake in meeting so near New York. I own an isolated farm sixty miles away. If it suits you, and if you have the money, I'll rent it to you so that you can make a nudist centre out of it. Nobody will bother you there.'

" After such an occurrence what is one to think of American justice and American intelligence? "

I, too, await an answer to the question. Part of the tale — too much of it — is true.

The Melting-Pot

A gymnasium on 100th Street, New York City. Underneath, a fair-sized swimming-pool, a handball court, and a Turkish bath.

Clothing was required in the gymnasium — why, I do not know — but it was highly abbreviated. In a boxing-ring two men sparred. When they were finished a group began passing a medicine-ball. Two women raced on stationary bicycles, making pointers rotate about the faces of dials which registered miles and fractions. Men and women worked on horizontal bars, on parallel bars, at chest-weights, at rowing-machines.

An instructor took his place in a corner. Class calisthenics began and continued for a serious, hard-working half-hour. The crowd was so large that it overflowed the gymnasium.

The half-hour ended. A few enthusiasts remained to work with the apparatus. The majority sought the

THE MELTING-POT

locker-rooms, to appear quite naked a few instants later a floor below.

The use of showers before entering the pool was compulsory, but it was an admonition that was not required. All six showers were in use constantly, men and women lining up to take their turns.

I dived into the pool. The water was icy. I scrambled out again.

At one side I could see figures behind plate-glass windows. I opened a door and found myself in a hot-room. All of the chairs were occupied. A girl offered me the use of her foot-rest. I accepted.

"Is this the first time you're trying nudism?" she asked.

"No; I've done it before."

"Where?"

"In Germany."

"Oh, are you a German?" I shook my head. "There are lots of Germans in this club."

I had made that discovery for myself. Accents were plentiful: German, Swiss, Italian, Polish, proletarian New-Yorkese.

"I come here in the winter," continued the girl. "Last summer I went to Highland." That was another centre.

"How did you come to start nudism?"

"My father, who's a native American, tried it when he visited Germany. He liked it. Now my whole family goes in for it."

She had touched on a salient characteristic of Ameri-

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can nudism. Here, to a much greater extent than abroad, nudism is a family affair. The majority of the devotees whom I have met in America are accompanied by relatives when they visit the centres.

“ Didn't you find it something like a cold plunge when you tried it for the first time? ”

She shook her head. “ Oh, no! When I was at boarding-school, and before I had ever heard of nudism, I tried sleeping without my pyjamas one night. I liked it. The next night my room-mate tried it. She liked it, too.”

“ That was hardly nudism.”

“ I know it — but when nudism came, I was anxious to try it. I took to it at once.”

A schoolgirl's reason — it amused me.

I left the hot-room.

A middle-aged, stocky man, with a harassed look, spoke to me. He was one of the minority able to express himself in correct, unaccented English. “ How very brown you are! ” he said. “ You must have been out in the sun a lot. I go swimming every Sunday at Xville, on Long Island. The air is cold at this time of year, but the water is still warm, and nobody lives near there. We make up parties. It's good fun: swimming without a bathing-suit.”

I met a married woman of Polish-Austrian origin.

“ My husband,” she introduced. She pointed across the pool. “ There's my brother-in-law. There's his wife, my sister. My daughter comes, too.”

I met a noisy young English-American.

“ My wife's abroad. She's going to spend the winter

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in Vienna. Do you know a nudist club she might join there? Oh, you do? Wait a minute while I get a pencil and a scrap of paper and jot the name down. . . . They go swimming in the Margaretenbad once a week? My wife will love that. She's very fond of nudism."

I met the girl who took cash at the door.

"I haven't much time for a dip," she said. She plunged in.

An extremely stout girl, who had just visited the showers, made her appearance. She pointedly avoided the scales which stood in a corner. She stood at the edge of the pool shivering and hesitating. One of her friends pushed her in.

I returned for an instant to the men's locker-room. A tall girl, naked, was standing in the middle of the floor.

"Who's driving to Brooklyn tonight?" she was inquiring. "I want a lift to Brooklyn."

I swam once more.

A man spoke to me in the water. His accent was so thick that I replied in German. As I had guessed, it was his native tongue. I tried another. He replied in Czech. A third addressed me in "*Switzerdutch*."

A curiously mixed lot, the members, as I had already begun to find out.

"How do you do? I'm Doctor N—," one of them introduced himself.

"A doctor of medicine or a doctor of philosophy?"

"No; nothing like that. I'm a chiropodist."

Another mentioned persons and places I knew well.

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It turned out that he was a servant at a famous Palm Beach club.

“ Say, was ya out at the farm in Joisey last Sunday? ” inquired still another. “ A guy told me he seen ya there.”

“ Who is the man who just spoke to me? ” I put the question as soon as he had vanished.

“ Oh, him? That’s E—, one of the Board of Directors.”

The harassed-looking, middle-aged, stocky man became confidential. “ They plan,” he told me, “ to make this club a cross-section of American society: high-brow and low-brow; rich and poor; college graduates and grade-school graduates; brain-workers and manual labourers; employers and employees. Don’t you think it’s an unworkable plan? College men don’t find manual labourers congenial. They stop in once or twice — and don’t come back — yet I understand the directors have turned down applications from the most desirable candidates on the ground that the upper classes are not in need of representation. In a word, it’s communism. What’s your opinion? ”

I shook my head. I saw no reason for discussing internal policies which contented the large majority. “ My opinion,” I said, “ is that this is the most interesting Turkish bath I have ever visited. I’ve been to many Turkish baths, and I’ve always known that something was wrong with them, but until I came here, I never could put my finger on it. Now I know.” I opened the door of the hot-room. “ Turkish baths need co-educa-

tion. Women bring sociable and æsthetic elements into the picture, and that," I said, as I disappeared on the other side of the plate glass, "is what Turkish baths have always lacked."

The Hill

Somewhere in New England — somewhere where not even the inhabitants of the near-by village suspect the activities which take place on "the Hill," which, by the way, is not the name by which the property is known locally — is a club whose restrictions are severe. Regularly nine out of ten applicants are turned down. It has applied to a nudist organization the standards that are in vogue in every social club, and its first demand is that the candidate shall be congenial to the members. It happens that the club was founded by men and women of university education, or its equivalent. They choose to demand similar qualifications — and personal acceptability — of new members, with the result that the club grows slowly but solidly and is homogeneous in a sense that is true of no other that I have visited.

The members are stockholders in the corporation. Some of them have already built on lots forming part of the club property; more of them are now building. These smaller houses cluster near the main cottage, built of the local stone. It is large and comfortable. It is so large that the members were able to produce Tom Cushing's *Barely Proper* in a corner of it last

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September. It was my misfortune to return from Europe too late to witness the epoch-making *première* of the play which would draw unprecedented crowds were it to be presented in any recognized theatre. But since the characters represented are nudists, and since they appear in costume, which is to say in none whatever, the audiences, for some years at least, must be recruited from among their fellow-nudists. The performance, both actors and audience assured me, was a huge success.

The grounds at "the Hill" spread over twelve hundred acres and are off the main road. Presently they will be shielded in their entirety from the country lane which is used by the butcher, the baker, and the postman. There are two tennis-courts. There is a court for ring-tennis. There are fields and hills and woods and a lake, and next summer there will be a concrete swimming-pool.

On a Saturday I played tennis with some of the members. It was chilly, therefore we wore shoes and shorts — an extraordinarily comfortable costume for a decidedly athletic game. We drew on training-suits when we had finished playing, and we lighted cigarettes. In America it is possible to embrace nudism without subscribing to abstinences of any kind. If the nicotine-haters are "tortured" by the sight of a cigarette, they have but to look in another direction; if vegetarians object to meat, they need not eat it.

Those of us who felt sociable gathered together and chatted; those who did not sought seclusion and were

not disturbed. Some of us were nude; others were not. Except for the single suggestion that clothing was in order in and about the cottages, where we might be visible to passers-by, there were no hard and fast rules. Whatever the situation, good taste would deal with it more effectively than formal regulations. I wore a training-suit because I was overheated. When I had cooled off sufficiently, I discarded it.

“Swimming?”

In a long Indian file we streamed through the woods, down the hills, to the lake. We bathed, a dozen or more of us, and there was not a bathing-suit to be seen — but if there had been one, I doubt if any of us would have objected. “The Hill” has returned to the oldest of American ideals: it is fundamentally libertarian.

Evening. We gathered at the fireplace in the main building and talked. I had brought with me photographs taken at the European centres I had visited. They were passed from hand to hand. A curious phrase in a foreign-language periodical occasioned lively debate — and yet every person present was American, born of parents born in America.

Quite naturally the conversation turned repeatedly to nudism. One of the men said that he thought it had no effect whatever on morality.

I disagreed with him. “I’ve just come back from a long tour of Europe. Three quarters of the non-nudist girls I met in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna offered to accompany me for a week or a month, as I pleased. Of the much larger number of girls I met at the centres,

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exactly three told me that they would like to come along. How do you account for that? ”

“Easily,” he said; “the non-nudists saw only your nice car; the girls at the nudist clubs saw your figure.”

I laughed. “That’s *one* explanation,” I admitted.

Sunday, being hot, I played tennis with no clothing except shoes and socks. It was amazingly pleasant, and I was not confronted with the usual dilemma: whether to wear soaked garments a second time, or to provide against that disagreeable necessity by travelling with enough shirts, flannels, and underwear to stock a small-sized haberdasher’s shop. I have played in many hotly contested matches. Some day I shall calculate what part of my total energy was expended on the game and what part on carrying around unnecessary clothing. I have seen the shirts of players in national tournaments become so wet and transparent that they might as well have worn none — yet were they to discard them, there would be a hullabaloo. . . .

“Swimming? ”

We swam. We returned to the pleasant meadows and sunned ourselves. I noticed that the women did not use cosmetics. They *would* be out of place among nudists.

When our Sunday dinners had been well digested, we played baseball — with an indoor baseball. Tucked away in the twelve hundred acres of land was a satisfactory baseball diamond.

I batted against the pitching of an eighteen-year-old

THE HILL

girl. She was completely naked, as were we all. The opposing catcher was another young girl. The infield and the outfield were highly miscellaneous.

It was the inning of the other side. I played short-stop. I stared at our third baseman. She was a young married woman with reddish hair, and she fascinated me. Never, in the course of nine innings, did she catch a ball; but to see her skimming swiftly over the meadow and over a low stone wall in pursuit of the many balls she muffed was a delight. Her grace was exquisite. She ran so lightly that she seemed to float, barely touching the grass with her feet, and she always came back to her position unwinded.

A small audience watched us. A few persons in it had draped bath-towels around their necks; one woman, who admitted that she had a cold, was fully clad; most of the handful of spectators were nude — and doubtless ten thousand persons would have paid speculators' prices to witness our game.

I said as much to one of the observers.

She nodded. "I was thinking the same thing. It's curious, isn't it?"

The day was drawing to a close. I said farewell until the next week-end.

I began the long drive home.

I began thinking.

Once again I had spent many hours in the company of congenial people who flew in the face of conventional customs; yet I doubted if the behaviour of our friends

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in the country-clubs we belonged to nearer our homes had been as correct as ours. I was returning home exhilarated, clear-headed, thoroughly refreshed.

There was still time for another week-end or two in the open before cold weather set in — and then, among the numerous indoor groups, meeting once or twice a week to prevent themselves from growing flabby during the winter, I would find one that was congenial.

I realized that my adventures in nakedness had not ended. They had only begun.

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ANNOUNCEMENT AND RULES OF THE SPARTA CLUB (Abridged)



PHYSICAL CULTURE COURSES AT PARIS:

[*Gymnastic classes nearly every afternoon and evening, some mixed, some open only to women and children, some for Sparta Club members only.*]

Men wear trunks for all indoor gymnastics classes; women wear either trunks and brassières or bathing-suits.

NUDIST FREE-CULTURE CENTRE:

Solarium at "Manoir Jan," in the country near Mantes.

The Centre is situated in a wooded park of eight hectares which is completely walled in. It is open the year round. Members, upon presentation of current membership cards, may have access to it at any time, and may reside in the furnished manor-house on the following terms:

2 Dormitories: 6 fr.; with blankets and full supply of linens, 10 fr. Rooms (so far as available): 20 fr.

Meals: Breakfast, 2 fr. 50; dinner or supper, 10 fr., beverage included. (Meat dishes, 5 fr. extra.) Other light refreshments supplied as ordered. Special rates for vacationists. Meals are served either in the great hall of the manor or on the lawn.

In the event of inclement weather there are friendly reunions in the great hall, and reading-matter is at hand. On Sundays, following the midday meal, there are talks in the open, led by qualified persons.

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The park contains: a nudarium for sun- and air-bathing; heavy gymnastic apparatus; a stadium for games (complete nudity); a sport-stadium (semi-nudity); lawns and walks (costumes such as usual at bathing-resorts and in the country).

The atmosphere is healthful, sympathetic, and restful.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Make application at the office, 2 bis, rue Logelbach, depositing the attached blank, properly filled out, together with satisfactory proof of identity. Married women must attach the written authorization of their husbands. Persons between the ages of 16 and 21 must supply the written authorization of their legal guardians. Children under 16 are not admitted to the Centre except in the company of parents.

After the application has been accepted by the management, the candidate delivers or sends to the office two identity photographs, for the files and for the membership card, and makes payment of the first instalment. (A family should supply two photographs of all its members who will visit the Sparta Club.)

Members receive provisional cards which allow them to visit the Centre and take part in the courses immediately. Definitive cards are delivered after the second payment has been made.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP:

The rates, reduced to the lowest point permitted by charges for amortization, improvements, and running expenses, are varied to accommodate different classes of members. The subscription is valid a year from the date of joining.

Families (husband, wife, and children under the age of 15) together: 500 fr. Single persons (men): 500 fr.; (women): 300 fr.; two sisters (together): 500 fr.

Non-resident members (Seine and Seine-et-Oise excepted): subscriptions, for the same categories, 200 fr. instead of 500, and 150 fr. instead of 300.

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RULES

I

The object of the "Sparta Club" is the harmonious development of the individual and the maintenance of his physical, intellectual, and moral equilibrium. As a means toward this end we apply the methods of "free-culture."

II

The members agree to make the efforts necessary to better themselves and to spread the methods whose benefits they realize.

III

In order to join the "Sparta Club" it is necessary to submit two photographs, a medical certificate proving that the candidate is free from mental or contagious disease, and whatever other information may be proper to establish the identity and the good faith of the candidate.

IV

Married women must attach to their applications authorizations signed by their husbands. Young people between the ages of 16 and 21 must furnish the written authorization of their legal guardians. Children under 16 are not admitted except in the company of their parents.

V

Every member will receive an active-membership card to which his photograph is attached.

VI

The management disclaims all liability for wounds, injuries, or accidents which may result to members while running, jumping, playing, or bathing.

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VII

No person not a club member may visit the areas reserved for nudism. An exception may be made for physicians or other persons of professional quality.

VIII

Membership cards for the current year must be shown at each visit to the "Sparta Club."

IX

Members are particularly requested to see to it that both these rules and the interior regulations are respected.

INTERIOR REGULATIONS¹

1. "Immediately upon their arrival new members should present themselves, together with their membership cards, to the director, or, in his absence, to the gymnastic instructor. They should introduce themselves to their fellow-members. A spirit of good-fellowship should prevail at all times."

2. "Nudity is neither an object nor an ideal, but is simply a method useful in improving physical and mental conditions. The members should not visit 'Manoir Jan' solely to practise nudity there, but even more to benefit themselves by contact with nature."

3. Costumes: outside of the areas reserved for nudity, men should wear tennis trousers and shirts, and women a two-piece equivalent. Training-suits are acceptable. Specially designed costumes are for sale at the house, or may be made for the members elsewhere. The feet should be shod either in rope sandals or in leather. Head coverings, if used, should be either

¹ Owing to the diverse activities of the Club, these are quite detailed. I summarize them, placing in quotation marks matter directly translated from the original. — J. S.

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bérets or white canvas hats. The object of the preceding suggestions is twofold: "to do away with costumes which are fantastic and sometimes ridiculous," and to prevent "the elegance of some from clashing with the simplicity of others."

4. Forbidden: "any word or act offensive to morality"; nudity, except in the areas reserved for it; photography; smoking in the stadia; bathing except in the swimming-pool. Compulsory: participation in calisthenics.

5. "Club members may invite their friends to luncheon, but they are not permitted to enter the areas reserved for nudism."

ADVICE

"Avoid sunstroke. Acquire the tan which will protect you against the sun's rays gradually. If you are a novice, do not expose yourself too long to the sun, particularly when you are motionless.

"Accustom yourself progressively to taking part in gymnastics, games, and sports. Do not play yourself out by attempting too much.

"If you want advice, ask the director or the gymnastic instructor, or speak to the older members.

"From ten o'clock to noon the director is at the service of members who wish to be measured or weighed.

"Replace the books and periodicals which are at your disposal, so that other members may also read them.

"Collect the balls, etc., and place them in the dressing-rooms when you are through with them."

NOTICE

"We earnestly request our members to lighten the task of the housekeeper of the 'Sparta Club,' who is entirely responsible for matters of food and lodging.

"It is difficult for her to plan the meals if she does not know in advance how many guests will be present.

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“It should be borne in mind, moreover, that the ‘Sparta Club’ restaurant does not operate like commercial restaurants: all provisions are of top quality, and no artificial products are used in preparing them. The running expenses, also, are considerably increased by the necessity of keeping the Manor open all week and all year to accommodate travelling members and to cater to Saturday and Sunday crowds.

“Sure that our members will appreciate the efforts we make to satisfy them, we ask them, if they have any warranted complaints, to make them to the housekeeper, who will be glad to receive all suggestions.”

MANIFESTO OF THE CLUB DE LOUMÈDE



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CLUB:

The estate which our Club owns at Loumède is a private property.

It cannot and should not be considered in any manner a public place.

Except for a strict and compulsory compliance with the rules and by-laws, which each has signed and with which each should be familiar, every member of the Club is AT HOME there, and should act as he would in HIS OWN HOME.

The aims of our Club are not mysterious. They are frankly stated and are known to the authorities. But in order to avoid jarring susceptibilities, and similarly in the interest of the free-culture movement, we detail the precautions which should be observed so that nudists and free-culturists may live side by side, and so that the rural population in whose midst we reside may not be shocked by our practices during the time which must needs elapse until it embraces them.

Semi-nudity (a minimum of trunks for men or trunks and brassières for women) is in order everywhere on the property. Street costume, as usual in these parts, should be worn in the hotel part of the Centre at all times.

Admission to the GYMNIC STADIUM is reserved exclusively to those members of the Club who have been admitted to the gymnic section by the committee.

This Stadium must be entered and left only by means of the path opposite the PHYSICAL CULTURE STADIUM.

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Complete nudity is obligatory in the grounds of the GYMNIC STADIUM.

Gymnic members should not undress until they have passed the second wire fence; returning, they should re clothe themselves before passing the same fence.

Garments should be placed in the shelters provided for them in the GYMNIC STADIUM.

In order to simplify supervision, and to provide the maximum security, promenading between the two fences, clad or unclad, is absolutely prohibited.

The PHYSICAL CULTURE STADIUM is at the service of all, and under the protection of all. The same applies to the games and the shower-baths.

Two class calisthenic lessons are given daily, at 9 and at 18 o'clock. The attendance of all members present at the Club is indispensable.

While lessons are in progress, games are forbidden. Persons in street attire are not permitted to enter the PHYSICAL CULTURE STADIUM. Nothing can be more disagreeable to members taking lessons in physical culture than the curiosity and criticism of their comrades as ordinary spectators.

On account of the danger of fire it is forbidden to build fires or to smoke anywhere on the grounds.

Campers may build fires in the clearing to the left of the entrance; the terrace of the Club is at the disposition of smokers.

Members visiting the beach should be in extremely correct costume, and should not tread on growing plants.

The road to the beach is not public, and we make use of it through the courtesy of the owners. It is becoming, therefore, that we avoid offending them either by picking growing things or by indulging in costumes which we may approve but which are not yet sanctioned by the world in general.

Outside of the GYMNIC STADIUM complete nudity is forbidden, and members who try it risk the censure of the Ex-

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ecutive Committee and the punishment provided by French Law.

All of these regulations, which may appear severe at first sight, but whose need will be realized on reflection, being stated herewith, your committee reminds you that the prosperity of the Club depends on your frequent use of it. Its future and the spread of our ideas depend on you.

Your committee will attempt the impossible to satisfy everybody, but on the condition that it may count on your cooperation.

And, fortified by our counsels, we hope to live happily under the banner of sympathy and mutual understanding.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PROSPECTUS AND RULES, FREILICHTPARK KLINGBERG



Proprietor and Director: PAUL ZIMMERMANN
Klingberg-on-the-Sea

Province of Lübeck. POST-OFFICE: Gleschendorf.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: *Freilichtpark Gleschendorf.*

RAILWAY STATION: *Dorf Gleschendorf, Lübeck-Kiel Division.*

Freilichtpark Klingberg is situated in eastern Holstein, on the southern shore of a 448-hectare inland lake, between the Lübeck-Kiel railway line and the shore of the Baltic Sea (Bight of Lübeck). It is a twenty-five-minute walk from the railway station, and a fifty-minute walk from the Baltic.

The Park spreads over five hills, which, for the most part, were planted with trees for the purpose they now serve. Most of them are a twenty- to twenty-five-year-old stand; a few are still older. Small cabins, in sheltered locations, are scattered on the heights as well as at the lake-side. A boggy pond, with deep water, lies between two hills, and is convenient for the use of swimmers. In addition the lake, with a gently shelving bottom, is available for children and non-swimmers. The water of the lake is crystal clear, and its bottom is of hard sand.

1. *Freilichtpark Klingberg* is dedicated to light-, air-, and sun-bathing without bathing-suits, as agreed and pledged by the Societies for Free-Bodily-Culture¹ and by the Association "*Amis de Vivre intégralement.*"

¹ NOTE [from the original]. Free-Bodily-Culture aims to carry out the original meaning of the word "gymnastic" (derived from

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2. *Freilichtpark Klingberg* is not dedicated to the use of the public, but only to those individuals whose use of it has been personally authorized by the Proprietor. It is his privilege to withdraw any authorization, effective at once, without stating reasons, and without refunding whatever fees may have been paid. Appeal to the courts is barred.

3. Permission to visit the Park may be had by persons sympathizing with the Free-Bodily-Culture movement and sincerely interested in it, after indicating in writing their acceptance of the rules, and after providing full information about themselves. Questionnaire and pledge will be mailed on request. Anonymous questions will not be answered.

It is not necessary to belong to any particular organization connected with Free-Bodily-Culture in order to obtain admission, nor will such membership protect any person against expulsion, should complaints arise which, in my opinion, call for such action. It is my sole prerogative to decide which persons shall be received and which excluded.

4. Admission to the *Freilichtpark* makes the use of the property for air- and sun-bathing obligatory. Every visitor may wear bathing-costume or not, as he pleases. Since, however, nudism is and must remain the fashion, persons who for whatever reason do not wish to bathe entirely naked — least of all in the company of other persons whom they do not know — are requested to keep their distance from the nudists. Twenty-five acres of variegated grounds make possible an unforced division among visitors whose points of view may differ. Persons

“*gymnos*” = naked): the development of the naked body by light, air, and movement. For fuller information consult the article “*Nacktkultur*” in Meyer’s *Lexicon*. The central organization there referred to, ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT DER BÜNDE DEUTSCHER LICHTKÄMPFER, has been reorganized under the name of REICHSV ERBAND FÜR FREIKÖRPERKULTUR (office, Berlin SW 68, Yorkstrasse 22). — The corresponding organization in the Latin countries is directed by Kienné de Mongeot, 2 bis, rue Logelbach, Paris-17e.

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interested only in observing the nude bathing of others are invited to leave the Park.

For those young girls and women who consider themselves bound by implanted social prejudices, and who, because of such barriers, feel themselves unable to take part in the general light-life, a considerable part of the grounds has been reserved: the southern exposure of the *Huhnengrabhugel*, which was incorporated into the *Luftbadpark* in the spring of 1931, but which is used exclusively as a sun-bath for women.

5. The use of the *Landhaus* and its surroundings is permitted only while clothed. Garments may be light, but they should not be in bad taste, giving rise to possible annoyance.

When going bathing in the lake persons may traverse the public road either in a bathrobe or in the light costume in vogue at North Sea and Baltic Sea bathing-resorts.

Boats must not be used by persons while nude, even if inoffensive to strangers in other boats or to strangers on other shores.

Nude promenading along the beach, except at the spot reserved for nude bathing, is not permitted.

6. When undressing, use the dressing-rooms in the Park house; should they be occupied, use the spaces in and about the evergreens near the exercise-grounds. At the lake use the garderobes provided.

Avoid hanging clothing on trees and bushes where it may meet the eye.

7. Tents may be erected in areas reserved for them on application.

8. Bathing in the *Moorteich* may be indulged in only at the various spots known to have been made safe. Bathing elsewhere, walking over the islets, and swimming across the pond are dangerous, and particular warning of that fact is given.

9. On account of the great area of the grounds, and the impossibility of supervision, all responsibility is disclaimed for the property of guests, even if brought into rented rooms. Similarly

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liability is disclaimed for any wounds, injuries, or accidents resulting from the use of the grounds for swimming, sport, play, or other purposes. A release from such liabilities is required upon admission.

10. The importation and use of wine, beer, and spirits, as also smoking, are prohibited in the Park.

11. Photography on the grounds is permitted only when the photographer has obtained a special permit from me. Should guests be in any part of the Park that is being photographed, the consent of all of them must be obtained. It is absolutely forbidden to photograph any person or group of persons without their knowledge and their previously given consent. Silent endurance must under no circumstances be interpreted as permission. Two prints from every negative must be delivered to me. The publication of prints in newspapers calls for my authorization as well as the written permission of every person recognizable in them, and a copy of the latter must be deposited in my files. Any violation of the preceding will result in the arrest of the photographer and in his prosecution to the fullest extent.¹

12. Inspection of the grounds, while in use, is not permitted. Upon written application, however, tours of inspection may be arranged. Persons who identify themselves as physicians or as teachers of gymnastics may take part in such inspections without paying the Park fee.²

13. All visitors are requested to keep the grounds scrupu-

¹ Compare this admirable section with section 11 of the Eggestorf dissertations. — J. S.

² This section must in no event be misunderstood. Ordinary sight-seeing by tourists or by other outsiders is never permitted. Apart from the exception made in the final sentence, "tours of inspection" are permitted *only* to persons contemplating immediate participation in nudism, and who have the right to inquire what they may expect before taking the plunge. During the course of my eleven-day visit no person who took part in any "tour of inspection" failed to reappear nude within an hour. — J. S.

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lously clean, and either to keep an eye on children and careless persons or to notify the Park authorities as soon as possible.

14. The right to amend or amplify these rules is reserved, and bulletins in the *Landhaus* and the *Parkhaus* will give notice thereof.

PAUL ZIMMERMANN

“SONNENLAND”



*Free-Light Grounds of Hellmuth Beschke
Egestorf (Bezirk Hamburg)*

REPLY TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Various points in our Prospectus, and in the House- and Ground-Rules of FREILICHTGELÄNDE “SONNENLAND” now and again give rise to questions which are more or less critical of existing usages and regulations. They are justified throughout from the standpoint of the individual; but without an exact knowledge of the state of affairs some rules, necessary on the basis of many years’ experience, might be considered severe.

Every guest has the right to ask what reasons warranted the promulgation of rules which, to a certain extent, touch him personally. The following, therefore, makes an attempt to explain broadly and clearly. At the same time it relieves the signatory of the pledge of the duty of answering every questioner by going into the ins and outs of the underlying principles.

Precisely the points which are most frequently misunderstood rest on the thought that the interest of the many is more important than that of the individual. Egestorf has assumed the task of presenting the idea of nudism (*Freikörperkultur*) to the world. In order to serve that great object visitors to the Free-Light Grounds must subordinate themselves to the rules and principles of the movement.

A Free-Life-Stature (*Freie Lebensgestaltung*) does not imply unlimited freedom for the individual regardless of the rest of humanity. It implies rather the amalgamation with the ideal

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known to be right of those outstanding principles of living which are approved by reason. "Sonnenland" avoids extremes, and so far as the question of food is concerned, goes the golden middle way. As for the rest, the old adage is unfortunately true here, too: "No man can please everybody."

The House- and Ground-Rules declare what is use and custom at Egestorf. The whys and the wherefores are dealt with in the following discussions. Whoever has questions to ask about daily routine, social amenities, views on life (*Weltanschauung*), charges for the use of grounds, participation of non-members, board, clothing, smoking and the use of alcohol, play and sport, air-bathing outside of the grounds, or the much-debated prohibition of photography may find an answer which will interest him in the appropriate section.

I. DAILY ROUTINE.

This runs on without any compulsion whatever on the visitors to the "Sonnenland" Free-Light Grounds. — Except for meal-times nobody is bound to observe any particular hour or time. Participation in the various activities is optional with each guest. One obligation, however, rests upon everybody: to subordinate what he does and what he does not to the idea of nudism, so that the movement may not be brought into discredit.

Reveille is at 7 o'clock in the morning. By that time early risers are already making excursions through the grounds. Calisthenics begin at 7.15. All guests take part in them without charge. Easy exercises alternate with difficult ones; whoever is unable to keep up simply steps out.

After the calisthenics, a refreshing dip in the pool, and in conclusion a heart- and lung-stimulating run through woods and fields, over the grounds. At 8 o'clock the guests gather at the breakfast-table, and, newly strengthened, fling themselves into the activities of the place. There is no hard and fast program. Each, according to his mood and inclination, indulges in play or sport. (See fuller details under Play and Sport.)

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Variety has been given sufficient forethought. Each guest, according to his own temperament, will find the activity he needs. When the bell announces lunch, at 12 o'clock, everybody is in a hurry, and everybody has a bear's appetite. The hours following the meal are dedicated to quiet. Above all, afternoon is a time for relaxation and rest. Only the indomitable ones are to be found at the playground immediately.

Most of the guests give themselves up to lone cool and shady walks through the woods, or lie in the flowery orchard meadow if they do not prefer to seek a quiet spot on one of the sunny declivities of the Heath.¹ Not until after afternoon coffee, at 4 o'clock, is everybody again assembled at play or splashing about in the pool. Those of somewhat maturer years act as spectators, or are deep in serious conversations.

At 7 o'clock the evening meal is eaten, and following that all join in a companionable gathering at 8 o'clock. Evenings in the house proceed either without constraint or in accordance with some set program. Oftenest some theme having to do with nudism and Free-Life-Stature is the subject of debate. However, there are always some guests present who may be depended upon for laughter, gaiety, and humour. — Bedtime comes at 10 o'clock, and after a day which has been full of activities, everybody sinks into bed tired.

2. SOCIAL AMENITIES.

Fanatics would abolish them at Egestorf. Of course that would be wrong, exactly as an exaggerated punctilio would be equally out of place. Social intercourse should be unconstrained, and in spite of that should not depart from consideration and tact. On the Grounds worldly forms and customs fall with clothes. Human encounters human. Titles, rank, and assets mean nothing. The salutation "Gracious lady" (*gnädige Frau*) would sound funny. For these reasons formal introductions are not in vogue on the Grounds, least of all during play.

As a rule the new arrival finds himself absorbed in one of

¹ *Heath*, the Lüneburger Heide, in the midst of which Egestorf is located. — J. S.

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the games without formalities of any kind. Usually the master of the house takes care of introductions in the shortest way by announcing the name of the new-comer to everybody. With individual guests the new arrival may best introduce himself personally in the main house. The happy and unforced intercourse on the Grounds engenders an atmosphere of mutual trust, which does not make it necessary at once to identify everybody by name. A man unclad is so little different from any other that when meeting dressed new introductions are usually in order.¹

3. VIEWS ON LIFE.

The League² is neutral on questions of religion and politics. The same holds good for Egestorf. One should therefore avoid bringing up these subjects in conversations either on the Grounds or during home-evenings. Every man should be happy in his own way, but he should not try to force his views upon another. Respect for the opinions of persons who happen to think otherwise creates confidence, while intolerance for other views does not accord with the basic principles of Free-Life-Stature.

While staying at Egestorf everyone should rid his mind of daily inconsequentialities, so that he may refresh himself in harmony and unity with nature. Since discussions dealing with the subjects above referred to usually end unsatisfactorily and merely encourage opposing argument, it is better to eschew them altogether. Peace and happiness strike the note which prevails at Egestorf, and the eternal moot questions are out of place.

4. CHARGES FOR THE USE OF GROUNDS.

League members particularly always ask why such a charge is made. That is comprehensible, for admission to League Grounds is free elsewhere. — "Sonnenland," however, is neither one of its leased nor one of its owned Grounds, and thereby

¹ My experience has been diametrically opposite. — J. S.

² The Liga für freie Lebensgestaltung, headed by Robert Laurer, Egestorf. — J. S.

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acquires a peculiar status. Bathing-establishments, sport-clubs, and the like require an initiation fee, which goes toward the installation of apparatus. For the same reason it is necessary to make a charge for the use of the Grounds. It goes toward improvements on the property, necessary every year, for betterments and enlargements of sport- and play-grounds and bathing- and swimming-pools, for the laying out of new roads, for the construction of shelter-huts, as well as for new appliances and apparatus used in sport. The operation of the pension cannot alone provide the needed funds.

5. PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS.

On account of the peculiar status of "Sonnenland," as explained in the preceding section, it is necessary that a certain number of guests who do not belong to any nudist association be received. These become acquainted with the House- and Ground-Rules by signing a pledge. Should their behaviour not be entirely inoffensive, their admission can be immediately withdrawn.

Our experience during the last few years has taught us that worthy people are to be found even among the so-called non-members.¹ In order to enlist them in the movement it is worth while to cultivate them.

6. FOOD.

The choice of the majority of the guests sets the standard for the bill of fare. The decision is in favour of a mixed menu. Vegetarian meals will be supplied on request, though not of raw food. It goes without saying that guests may, if they wish, provide their own meals.

7. CLOTHING.

Quoted in full, pages 195-7.

¹ One of the most remarkable assertions I have ever seen in print. It almost convicts Herr Beschke of possessing a sense of humour. — J. S.

8. SMOKING AND THE USE OF ALCOHOL.

Quoted in full, pages 184-5.

9. PLAY AND SPORT.

The possibilities offered to each guest by the playground are unlimited. The following are only a few of the most popular games: *Fangball*, *Handball*, *Neckball*, *Jägerball*, *Völkerball*, and many other sociable games. All varieties of light athletics are indulged in at the sport-ground: discus- and javelin-throws, bowls, running, high- and broad-jumps. *Rhönrad*, *Rundlauf*, *Schaukel und Ringe*, *Schwingball*, *Ringtennis*, and the medicine-balls are always much in demand.

In all games particular care should be taken to include newcomers in the ranks of the players immediately. Guests who have not adhered to the movement long, or who are neophytes, are frequently timid at the beginning. The feeling that they belong helps them to overcome this reaction. Of course somebody must explain the object of the game to the new-comer in the event that he does not know it.

The spirit of good-fellowship, which should govern all, forbids fault-finding at any game. It is an easy matter to create inferiority-complexes in those concerned. A word of praise for a new-comer is much more in order. It encourages him, and helps him to conquer the lack of assurance with which he may have begun. It is impossible to catch every ball, and even the most practised players muff occasionally. One should avoid giving too much applause to "cannon-ball" shots. It is more in place to discourage them, so that everybody may enjoy the game.

The making of records is not the object of sociable games. Athletic exercises should develop the body. The exhibition of the highest possible proficiency is a matter for athletes. Games and sport on the Egestorf Grounds should be governed by the joy of activity. Their ultimate aim is enjoyment.¹

¹ A section which deserves unstinted praise. Cf. text, pages 220-1. — J. S.

10. AIR-BATHING OUTSIDE THE GROUNDS.

Opportunity for charming and extensive rambles on the Heath and through its lovely surroundings is offered to the nature-lover. The spots most sought are the Wild Life Sanctuary, Wilseder Mountain, and the House on the Heath, even though a whole day's excursion is necessary. Shorter walks lead into the village or to the village park, adjoining our grounds, from whose sightseeing tower wonderful views are to be had. A stroll through the village park by moonlight is an experience.

The lonely Heath tempts many to take air-baths, sometimes for photographic purposes, and this is something to be shunned at all times. Some person, likely to take umbrage, may appear suddenly and without the slightest warning. A complaint follows, and such isolated cases provide the authorities, most of whom are ill-disposed toward us, with material with which they may attack the nudist movement. Such indiscretions constitute a most serious danger to Egestorf and, under the circumstances, must be considered hostile to the development of the Free-Light-Grounds.

We must be considerate of people who do not think as we do. The Grounds are freely dedicated to the practice of nudism. Air-bathing on the sly would attract elements which would make it impossible for a lady to venture upon a walk unescorted and, under the above conditions, would bring about a state of affairs which might do irreparable harm to the reputation of the movement. For that reason let each, in his own interest as well as in that of all, respect the boundaries of the Free-Light-Grounds.

11. PHOTOGRAPHY.

Most often the rule "Photography on the Grounds is permitted only to the few holders of photo-permits issued by the League" is not taken seriously. In spite of the fact that a copy of the rules is placed in the hands of nearly every visitor prior to his arrival, every guest brings his camera with him and becomes greatly irritated when he discovers that he will have no

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use for his large stock of plates. While the prohibition of picture-taking may seem to be a hardship at first glance, it is nevertheless well founded and considered. It may be added parenthetically that photography, except as stated above, is not permitted on any similar League properties.

The holders of photo-permits are all photographers of some years' standing who have had considerable experience in the difficult art of making photographs from the nude. Pictures are indispensable for the spread of the idea, but the movement can use only unobjectionable photographs. For each picture the photographer must obtain the express permission of all persons to be shown in it. In addition, and this is most important, they must clearly understand and agree that the photograph may eventually be used for publication.

Despite this there is a good deal of secret snapshotting, much to the harm of the movement, because its results are seldom calculated to produce the best impression on an outsider. The proof of it is that such pictures frequently fall into improper hands.

Many amateurs do not do their own developing, and the photo-finisher sees to it that a few extra prints are retained. People who know nothing of our movement or who do not wish to understand it may well look at such prints with lustful feelings. But even photographs developed by the amateur himself are not safe against that.

By prohibiting photography we aim primarily to protect persons who might be photographed against their wishes or without their knowledge. Should such a picture fall into the hands of an unsympathetic person, great harm may, in certain instances, result to the subject, wholly aside from the discredit it thereby casts on the movement. Only rarely is an amateur photograph æsthetically pleasing, for nothing is more difficult to photograph than the naked body. Since all of us are more or less unaccustomed to act with perfect freedom and lack of constraint when nude, people do not look natural in such photographs. They look undressed. —

There are two groups of amateurs: the family snapshotter, and the "model-hunter." The more harmless of the two, who

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wants only to make "souvenir pictures," usually has not the remotest desire to include strangers in his photographs. He wants only pictures of the family. In his zeal he does not pay enough attention to the backgrounds and to the corners, and persons who had no suspicion that they were being photographed, and who, as a matter of fact, may have expressed strong objections, may appear in the pictures when they are developed.

The family snapshotter knows how greatly the strangers he photographs would be annoyed if they saw his prints. In spite of that he succumbs to a certain longing to show himself and his own family naked. Pictures which were taken for the most intimate family circle are shown just once to "a good friend." The whole town is immediately given the opportunity to learn that casual acquaintances were also at the centre. — "Yes, Herr Meier and Fräulein Schulze were also there with them." Without the picture having left the hands of the taker, the persons who were unconsciously photographed are disclosed.

These are exceptional cases — certainly — but however free from danger "souvenir pictures" may be in themselves, they do more or less mischief when they are "posed." A group picture, clothed, is tasteless enough in itself, but the "undressed Müller family" — beautifully grouped — is a crime. The nudist movement requires for its propaganda pictures other than those which the opportunist snapshotter is in a position to make.

Only rarely can posed pictures be considered merely ridiculous. Oftenest they deceive the photographer himself. They should be torn up on the spot. But the pride of the photographer does not permit that, even though pictures whose subjects know how well-intentioned they are may, on account of their incompetent representation, cause offence and injury to others.

Far worse than the "family snapshotters" are the so-called "model-hunters." They have designs on everybody and anybody (mostly on young women). They run from one to another, in order to get them into a picture. They arrange large group photographs. At every game they stand at one side with their black boxes as spectators, and they are most unhappy if they

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have not exposed two dozen negatives every day. Such individuals can become highly dangerous, even if they can be taxed with no bad motives.

Such photographers of all the world want their pictures circulated widely. They are not for themselves alone. They can order as many prints as they please, even of pictures in which they do not personally appear. Everybody must admire the pictures, not only participants in the movement, but even total strangers. It commences at the railway station, and stops at the table d'hôte. Can one blame anybody unacquainted with our aims for indulging in adverse criticism, which really is well justified, but which frequently proceeds into vulgarities and obscenities? If only the poor models could hear it!

Even if these people wanted to take pictures representing the movement with the best of intentions, no exception could be made for them. Out of a hundred photographs submitted to the art editor of the League, only two or three are acceptable. Something more is necessary. Not every picture, however good in itself, lends itself to reproduction. It would carry us too far afield were we to discuss all of the conditions with which a photograph must comply in order that a half-tone may be made from it.

For the above detailed reasons, and primarily out of consideration for the guests, photography on the grounds cannot be permitted.¹

¹ Part of this long, rambling disquisition is well-reasoned; much of it is nonsensical. As nudism spreads, and as honest photography of the nude becomes commoner, pornographic appeal will completely dissociate itself. — Herr Beschke's concern about persons who appear in backgrounds is not well founded. I have seen thousands of photographs taken and have yet to witness an occasion upon which the photographer did not warn all persons likely to be included. — The lack of artistic merit of most "souvenir pictures" is beside the point. Candour is a more valuable quality in nudist photography, and the "undressed Müller family" can appear strange only to persons outside of nudist circles. — Finally Herr Beschke's entire argument loses force when one reflects that no other centre in the world has been so much photographed as Egestorf. — J. S.

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12. COMPLAINTS.

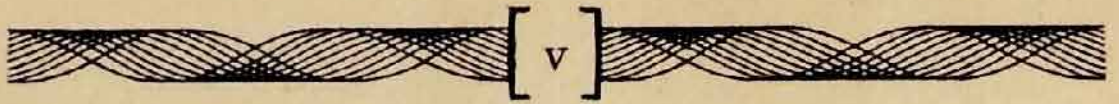
It is impossible to see into everybody's heart. Despite pledge and membership-card it may happen that a wolf in sheep's clothing is to be found among the guests. It occurs very rarely, but if any person does not conduct himself inoffensively in matters of behaviour and morals, immediate complaint should be made to the undersigned. The offender will then be observed, and if in my judgment the complaint is warranted, will, if need be, be expelled from the grounds. On no account should such an unfortunate incident cause anxiety or distress to the other guests.

Should such an occasion arise, or should there be any complaint about living-quarters, food, or similar matters, the guests are requested to bring it to the attention of the undersigned immediately and frankly, so that remedial measures may be undertaken as energetically as possible. The highest law for "Sonnenland" is: To make every guest satisfied, and to care for him in such a manner that he is content.

I have occupied myself with the above so that all of the questions frequently put to me may be exhaustively answered. Happily these disquisitions will everywhere encounter the intelligence which is prerequisite to a proper understanding of them. The measures adopted, as stated at the outset, are dictated by experience, primarily in the interests of the movement, and not last for the good and the protection of my guests. Should still other questions arise, in addition to those here dealt with, it goes without saying that I am more than ready to give an oral reply to them.

HELLMUTH BESCHKE

Egestorf, 1 April 1931



THE SCHWEIZER LICHTBUND



s.l.b.

articles

*of the schweizer lichtbund*¹

1. the s.l.b. unites people in whose opinion naked bathing in water, air, and sunlight is natural and healthy, and who aspire to it in order to lead a life in harmony with the times. they consider it an upward evolution and a liberation for the spiritual as well as the physical sides of mankind.

2. every adult who declares his assent to the articles and regulations can, in general, become a member. the central office has the right to deny admission to the bund, or to expel a member upon stating its reasons. membership in the bund merely makes possible, but does not guarantee, reception into a local or separate group, or at a centre, because the respective governing bodies act in accordance with their own inclinations, and may enforce still more rigid standards. they avoid only actions which may be considered contrary to the objects of the bund.

3. the s.l.b. was called into being by ed. fankhauser, laupenstrasse 3, berne, and is directed by him or his personal representatives (central office). directors of local and separate groups, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and the like, are at his side as advisory members.

4. the bund initiation fee consists of a single payment of 5 francs for women or 10 francs for men (postal-check-account

¹ The typographical eccentricities are those of the original. — J. S.

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III 5916). in exceptional cases this may be reduced or waived by the central office. in the event that the buying power of the swiss franc changes considerably while these articles are in force, the central office is empowered to lower or to raise the initiation fee. if both parents belong to the bund, children under the age of 18 are also members without further payment, though without the right to vote.

5. the central office maintains a list of members and a register classifying them according to localities. at least once in every year a list of localities in which members are to be found will be published in *die neue zeit*. further information on the manner of joining is contained in the supplement: "how does one become acquainted with light-friends?" every member should subscribe to the periodical *die neue zeit* or at least read it regularly, so that organizations may be made known by publicity in this, our official organ.

6. *die neue zeit* publishing company, berne, has taken charge of the organization work, as stated above, and annually places at the disposal of the bund 3 pages of text in its periodical, *die neue zeit*. in payment therefor the initiation fees become its property.

7. these articles may be amended or repealed after 10.1.1935 by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of a general vote, provided that not less than 30% of the members take part. the proponents of such motions must reimburse the central office in advance for the cost of conducting a general vote. finally, the names of the proponents shall be made public simultaneously with the call for the general vote.¹ the above articles take the place of those of 4 june

¹ Even American politicians may learn from this section. The Publishing Company's control of the Bund is absolute and permanent. The company, at its discretion, may admit members without charging an initiation fee. Should its domination ever be threatened, it can add without limit to the number of its supporters. If desirable, their votes can be used to neutralize an adverse majority; or by not voting at all the proportion of members taking part can

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1928, as well as of the older ones of the year 1927. headquarters are at berne.

berne, 15 january 1932.

directing principles for local and separate groups

as the result of a practical experience covering years the central office suggests to leaders of groups:

1. only persons who can be accepted as members of the bund should be permitted to join the groups. — new group members must take out memberships in the s.l.b. without the least delay, so that the national association may be in a position to provide legal assistance for the group in case of need.
2. the groups should accept as members only persons who fulfil at least one of the following requirements:
 - a) is a reformer of living-conditions,
 - b) is a devotee of sports,
 - c) has a well-built body,
 - d) has a public following.

general standards and precepts of the s.l.b.

I

every light-friend who wishes practically to concern himself with *freikörperkultur* should, without a doubt, consider the ques-

be reduced below the thirty-per-cent minimum. Possible rebels are still further crippled by the requirement that they submit to having their names published. In Switzerland business and professional men of high standing would not court such publication. Only the few individuals who derive their main incomes from nudism, and whose connexion with the movement is generally known, could permit it without risk. In justice to the Publishing Company I add that its control, while absolute, has, so far as I know, been able and beneficent. — J. S.

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tions of abstinence and vegetarianism. abstention from alcohol and nicotine (tobacco), and moderation in the eating of meat are, it goes without saying, allied movements. whoever wishes to become better acquainted with these principles of right living should read the volume entitled *lightwards*, by werner zimmermann. (members can arrange to borrow it from the central office.)

II

nude bathing is permitted in the canton of berne, provided that no passer-by is offended thereby. the following are two extracts from court decisions:

case of fankhauser, supreme court, berne, 29 september 1926:

chief justice: "the defendant has stated that these nudist gatherings take place on private property, far distant from the public domain. if that be true, little objection can be made against them. whether or not children are to participate in them is clearly the business of the parents, and if they remove their bathing-suits, indulge in sports, and do nothing more than that, it is obviously impossible to discern any offence deserving punishment. . . ."

case of steffen, police-court v, berne, 6 december 1926:

the judge found no outrage against decency in nude bathing, but on account of the public disturbance caused fined both of the defendants 5 francs each and assessed one-half of the costs against them. ("the bund," no. 522.)

we cannot say, on any basis of past precedent, what the attitude of the courts in other cantons may be. nevertheless decisions will sooner or later be handed down, for instance, by the court at zürich. as soon as such further decisions reach us, the members of the s.l.b. will be informed about them. — the central office expressly disclaims all blame for prosecutions resulting from disregard of the foregoing.

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III

on excursions group-leaders as well as all members are pledged to demand the credentials of the bund of all participants, as the central office can undertake their protection only if all of the participants have a common footing as members.

IV

every question addressed to the business office must be accompanied by 50 rp.¹ in postage stamps, or a reply by return mail need not be expected. a charge of 90 rp. is made for a copy of these articles and general principles, postpaid.

how does one become acquainted with light-friends?

as a rule this is possible only when they themselves have become members of the *schweizer lichtbund*, headquarters *berne*, laupenstrasse 3.

send 90 rp. in stamps to the above address, and ask for the necessary document,² which you will fill out truthfully and without omissions. with your application you must enclose two passport-size photographs of yourself (one for your membership card and one for the central office), and 5 fr. if you are a woman or 10 fr. if you are a man in payment of the initiation fee (postal-check-account III 5916).

if your application is accepted, credentials will be issued to you by the central office. should that not be the case, your initiation fee will be refunded.

upon receipt of the membership card it will be your privilege, upon payment of 70 rp., to ask for a copy of *the newest list of members*, which, for each locality, states the control-number of each member living there (without mentioning names), and

¹ "Rp." = "rappen," *Switzerdutch* for centime. 100 "rappen" = 1 franc Swiss, worth about \$0.20 at parity. — J. S.

² The questionnaire, a translation of which follows. — J. S.

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adds whether a man (m), a woman (f), or (at the time of joining the bund) single (l), or married (v), and gives the last two digits of the year of birth (thus, instead of 1897, 97 only). members who have already formed a group or who intend to form one are indicated by black-faced type or by underlining. in the event that the group has a name, it follows in brackets.

with each membership list we supply three questionnaires (such as you used when applying for admission). if you plan to write to more than three members, inform the central office.

now you can write to the selected member *through the central office*, accompanying your letter by a copy of your own questionnaire, filled in, and 70 rp. in stamps for further services. the letters should be addressed to the central office of the s.l.b., laupenstrasse 3, *berne*, which will verify the information and forward them. it may be added that a stamped envelope should be enclosed, as otherwise the member is not bound to return your enclosure should he not desire to meet you or correspond with you. as soon as the first list of members has appeared, it will be published in the periodical *die neue zeit* (published in *berne*), probably toward the end of march 1932.¹

¹ This highly ingenious plan has now been in operation for more than a year and appears to have worked admirably. Under it an individual wishing to start a group addresses himself exclusively to persons who have already indicated their sympathy with the movement. — J. S.



QUESTIONNAIRE OF SCHWEIZER LICHTBUND



questionnaire. (please write as legibly as possible and with ink!)

long experience compels us to require detailed information about our members, so that the movement may be kept free of questionable elements.

incomplete or false answers may lead to exclusion, or, in aggravated cases, to public exposure.

name: full given names:
residence: street: no.:
occupation: married? (yes or no)
nationality: complete date of birth:
names and years of birth of your children:

.....

religion: what is the attitude of your spouse toward the light-movement?

.....

how long have you been a member of the s.l.b.? do you belong to other organizations, and which?

.....

do you take part in sports, and which?

.....

are you a non-smoker, an abstainer, a vegetarian?

.....

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with what motives do you come to the s.l.b.?

through whom or what did you come to the s.l.b.?

have you already acted in accordance with the light-movement,
when and where?

how should our possible communications to you be addressed?

(nothing will be sent in care of general delivery, and nothing will be sent
sealed, as the matter will consist of circulars. moreover the latter will be
edited with all possible discretion, and will contain no pictures.)

what literature has played an important role in your life-
stature?

are you afflicted with any disease or bodily ailment? (full
details)

are you personally acquainted with light-friends, and whom?

can you be reached on the telephone? phone no.:.....

what periodicals and newspapers do you read?

which classifications of "directing principles for local and
separate groups" are applicable to you?

other remarks:

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declaration of adherence

i wish to adhere to the swiss lichtbund (s.l.b.) and herewith remit the initiation fee to the order of postal-check-account III 5916. i have received the articles as well as the other regulations of the bund, have read them attentively, and declare my assent to them. i enclose herewith two passport-size photographs of myself, one of which is reserved for my membership card. i have filled out the questionnaire conscientiously.

space for photo

place and date:

signature:

PROSPECTUS OF A HIGH-CLASS AMERICAN NUDIST CLUB



THE — CLUB

A—, Director

Assistants

B—, Sports

C—, Orthopedics and Dancing

D—, Swimming

E—, Fencing

F—, Riding

THE — CLUB is a holiday resort where people who can do so without offense may spend as much of the time as they desire unclothed. The club property is a private country estate. It consists of woodland and fields, and contains a natural lake. The buildings on the property include dormitories, studios, recreation centers for inclement weather, and so forth; and isolated cabins built for the occupancy of one or two persons.

ADMITTANCE

Admittance to The — Club is at the discretion of the Director. Persons living in or near New York City are interviewed in New York. Those living at a greater distance must submit a photograph and adequate credentials. The first visit of every guest is on a trial basis. If he proves to be acceptable he may, at a nominal fee of a dollar a year, become a member of The — Club. No guest who is not elected to membership may revisit the Club. The Director retains absolute authority to reject the application or to dismiss from the Club any guest or

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member who, for whatever reason, seems to be an objectionable member of such a group.

COSTUME

Nakedness is not compulsory to members or guests of The — Club. It is assumed, however, that persons who do not desire this additional facility for health and recreation will prefer to spend their holidays elsewhere. Guests who are timid or inexperienced in mingling with groups of naked people wear a bathing suit or simple sports costume until they choose to discard it. Guests are required to dress for meals and when they pass within sight of the public road.

ROUTINE

The activities of guests are routinized as little as possible. For those persons who desire it, there is a full day's program of games, work, sun-bathing, swimming, hiking, riding and so forth, but no guest is obliged to enter into any of these activities and he may spend as much or as little time as he chooses alone at rest or recreation or work.

SPORTS

The lake provides excellent swimming, diving, canoeing, sailing, boating, fishing. Group instructions in swimming, diving, life-saving, is given without charge to those members who desire it. Tennis, ring-tennis, medicine-ball, baseball, handball, outdoor basketball, archery, quoits, horse-shoes, croquet, boxing and fencing are available to members. Saddle-horses, and horses and buggies are also, at an additional charge, at the disposal of those guests who desire to ride on the adjacent country roads. Members of The — Club who want to play golf have guest privileges at a nearby country club where they pay a greens fee.

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MEMBERS

The majority of the members of The — Club are between the ages of twenty and forty. There is no age restriction. Among the frequent visitors are several families with young children. The honorary President of The — Club is a yachtsman of nearly seventy whose bearing, physique and general well-being are one of the better arguments for spending as much as possible of a long lifetime in the open without clothes. Other men and women well over fifty who have not been too careless of their figures and states of mind, are among the members of the Club. There is approximately an equal number of men and women members.

HEALTH

As much care as possible is taken to assure the well-being and improve the health of members of the Club. Upon arrival guests are invited to have a physical examination. If they are underweight or over-weight, in need of special corrective exercises or complete relaxation, they may have without charge the suggestions, instruction, and supervision of the directors of physical education. A weekly examination, or at least a second examination just before the guest leaves the Club after a stay of a fortnight or longer, is frequently of considerable interest and indicative of the definite value of living, even briefly, without clothes.

CHILDREN

Children who accompany their parents to The — Club, or who are sent by them, are placed in the care of competent counsellors trained in children's camps. They are taught water and land sports, woodcraft, handicrafts, music, dancing, languages, birch-bending, and other country arts. Children wear no clothing unless weather or briars make nakedness inexpedient. They may, or may not, mingle with grown people, as their parents desire.

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS

A group of a dozen city children who need the sun will be the guests of The —— Club for the month from July 20 to August 20. Through a careful study of the improvement in the health and disposition of these children, and a comparison with similar groups of children who do not go entirely naked, it is hoped to ascertain definitely whether it is more beneficial for children to wear no clothing, or to wear trunks or sun-suits.

LIBRARY

The —— Club maintains a modest library which includes most of the books and periodicals published in French, German and English concerning the nudist movement.

ENTERTAINMENT

Bridge, chess, ping-pong, and other parlor amusements are possible to those guests who desire them. Social dancing, and occasionally barn and folk-dancing fill empty or rainy evenings. Evening activities in the farmhouse and lodge living rooms and the recreation hall accord with the desires of the majority of guests. Usually there is quiet in one place, and music in another (they are a quarter-mile apart).

In the course of the summer a seven-reel nudist film, "This Naked Age," not generally available in New York State, will be shown from time to time. On Saturday, August 26, and Saturday, September 2, "Barely Proper" by Tom Cushing, under the direction of the playwright, will be presented. On Sunday, August 27, and Sunday, September 3, there will be recitals of string music and rhythmic dancing.

A weekly excursion in which those guests who desire may join, is made to the little theatres not too distant from The —— Club.

RATES

Rates for guests at The —— Club vary from \$1 to \$10 a day and from \$5 to \$60 a week. A guest may pitch his tent, pre-

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pare his own food, and have a limited use of the camp facilities for the lower price. The higher price affords him a private room in the lodge, the use of a sailing canoe (if he knows how to handle it), breakfast in bed (if he desires it), and numerous small attentions and conveniences.

A bed in the men's or women's wing in the large dormitory, and food, cost \$3 a day, or \$18 a week. Accommodation in the small dormitory costs \$4 a day, or \$25 a week. Two persons may share a room in the small farmhouse for \$4 each a day, or a room in the large farmhouse for \$5 a day. A bed on the lodge porch and the use of a dressing-room cost \$5 a day (with food), or \$30 a week. The cost of a room in the lodge shared by two people is \$7.50 each per day (\$42 per week); shared by three people, \$5 each per day (\$30 per week). A cabin without toilet facilities, shared by two people, costs \$3.50 each per day, or \$20 per week. A cabin with toilet and wash-basin, shared by two people, is at the \$5 daily or \$30 weekly rate per person. Rates for single cabins, or for longer periods of occupancy of any of the accommodations listed will be sent on request. There are hot and cold running water in the lodge, in the farmhouse, and in the large and small dormitories.

RESERVATIONS

Reservations may be made either at the Club by telephone, or through the New York office.

Only persons who have been provided with a guest card or membership card may make reservations.

REGULATIONS FOR THE HILL CLUB



Effective July 10, 1933

MEMBERSHIP

Members shall be admitted to the Club by four-fifths vote of the Executive Committee, subject to certification by Mr. J— that they are stockholders in the — Corporation or have made satisfactory payment on account of such stock.

At the request of the — Corporation, the Committee will withhold the privileges of the recreation grounds from or suspend the membership privileges of any member whose financial relations with the Corporation are unsatisfactory.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS

No member or guest shall cut down or mutilate any living tree, or make a trail or clearing anywhere on the Club property, without the express written consent of Mr. J—, to be handed to a member of the Executive Committee.

All rackets, balls, rings and similar sporting equipment are to be kept, when not in use, in the box provided for that purpose.

Campers and picnickers shall carry their garbage, empty cans and other refuse to the garbage pit west of the clubhouse.

Persons wishing to camp or pitch a tent on the Club property are requested to arrange the location with Mr. J— or with the Executive Committee.

GUEST PRIVILEGES

Every non-resident member may, between April and October, inclusive, of each year, extend the privileges of the recreation

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grounds to guests within the following time limits: the number of days spent by all the guests of any one member to total not more than 28. Resident members may admit guests without limitation of number or time, except that recreation ground privileges are restricted to 14 days for any one guest. Residence shall consist of at least four consecutive weeks spent at the Hill.

In the administration of the above regulation, a married couple together with their children under 21 years of age may not be counted as more than one member. A man and/or woman, together with their children, may be counted as one guest.

Any person applying, independently of members, for information about the Club, may, with the consent of Mr. J— or of any member of the Executive Committee designated by him, be admitted, together with members of his immediate family, to the recreation grounds as a guest of the Club, ordinarily for a period of not more than three days. Such guests must be accompanied, when on the recreation grounds, by Mr. J— or by a member of the Executive Committee.

No guest may enter the recreation grounds except in the company of his sponsor, and the sponsor will be held fully responsible for the conduct of his guest. Under exceptional circumstances, this regulation may be waived by special permission of the Executive Committee.

No person shall be granted guest privileges on the recreation grounds for a total of more than 14 days in one calendar year.

If any guest is subsequently admitted to the Club as a member, the number of days which he has spent under the guest privileges shall not be counted in his sponsor's allotment of guest time.

REGISTRATION OF GUESTS

The name and address of every person admitted to the recreation grounds under the guest privilege, together with that of his or her sponsor, shall be entered in a book kept in the clubhouse

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for that purpose and open to inspection by all members, together with the date on which use of the recreation grounds is to begin. When use of the grounds is to end, the number of elapsed calendar days shall be entered in the appropriate space. A fractional part of a calendar day must be counted as an extra day.

ADMISSION TO GROUNDS

From April to October, inclusive, no person shall at any time be admitted to the recreation grounds except members of the Club, guests of members or of the Club (in accordance with the provisions of the guest regulations), personal guests of the J— family, and persons specifically hired by Mr. J— for labor on the premises. Servants in the employ of members may be admitted, when necessary for service to members, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

CANCELLATION OF PRIVILEGES

Wilful or repeated violations of these regulations will be considered sufficient grounds for the suspension or cancellation of membership privileges.

AMENDMENTS

These regulations are subject to amendment at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

....., *Chairman*

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
*from SOCIAL NUDISM AND THE
BODY TABOO*

by HOWARD CROSBY WARREN

*Stuart Professor of Psychology
Princeton University*



(From *Psychological Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2, March, 1933, reprinted here by the courtesy of the author.)

A brief historical review indicated that among civilized races and savages clothing has been adopted to a great extent for body concealment as well as for protection or ornament. In some races this body taboo has been *familial*; under Christian influences it has come to be largely *intersexual*; in Anglo-Saxon lands it has risen to the level of a moral principle.

Recently there has been a growing tendency to discard superfluous clothing and to limit the taboo to a few sexually distinctive parts of the body. This has resulted in modifying the taboo, but not in abolishing it. In the last few years the practice of sun-bathing has weakened the taboo; but since the sexes are segregated in America, the intersexual restriction still persists. The nudist movement in Germany is a real challenge to the body taboo.

The attitude of the writer's friends and acquaintances toward *social nudism* is reported, and the opinions of psychologists in reply to a questionnaire are cited. All of these opinions were found to be based on theoretic grounds and not on personal experience.

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The writer spent a week at a nudist park in Germany and describes his experiences and observations. The data gathered, supported by findings of earlier writers, led to the following conclusions regarding the psychological effects of social nudism:

1. On coming into contact with a nudist group, the subjective experience of *shame* and the objective experience of *shock* tend to disappear at once or after a short time, so far as could be observed.

2. Where complete exposure of the body, except for protection from sun, rough soil, etc., is the universal practice in a group, there is no embarrassment or self-consciousness due to one's own nudity. The modesty attitude does not vanish along with the taboo, but its manifestations are almost diametrically reversed. Any gesture of concealment becomes an attribute of immodesty. Such gestures or attitudes were never observed; they would be socially discountenanced.

3. Where the entire group are unclothed, the sight of the naked body ceases to arouse curiosity. Nudity is accepted as a natural condition. Since there is nothing to focus the attention on any specific part, one has merely the impression of the body as a whole, and sex differentia no longer possess special significance.

4. The writer's observations and the testimony of others indicate that social nudity is not productive of eroticism. There is less sexual excitement, less tendency to flirt, less temptation to ribaldry, in a nudist gathering than in a group or pair of fully clothed young people.

5. The taboo is present so long as any part of the body is covered, not for protection but for concealment. This distinguishes genuine nudism from the near-nudism of athletes and the pseudonudism of the stage.

6. It is not clear from the data at hand whether the practice of nudism could be applied with advantage to the community at large.

APPENDIX

[Professor Warren's summary of his incisive monograph leads to two conclusions which may fittingly be quoted here:]

(1) Since the traditional body-taboo can be readily, almost immediately broken without detrimental results, it is not a fundamentally human trait.

(2) Social nudity is not in itself indecent; only a widespread and persistent social convention has made it so.



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